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Великая Отечественная: Неизвестная война



ДРУГАЯ хронология катастрофы

Марк Солонин

1941



Падение «сталинских соколов»

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Abstract

NEW BOOK by a leading military historian! Sequel to the bestseller A New Chronology of Disaster. The result of a large-scale 1941. The true reasons for of Soviet aviation at the the study of the defeat of the crushing defeat beginning of the war. Thousands of pages of primary documents from previously strictly classified archival funds. Unique maps of the deployment of airfields of the Red Army Air Force. Refutation of key Stalinist myths about the Great Patriotic War. The true chronology of the epic battle in the air, meticulously reconstructed from the documents of both sides.

Was the first strike of the Luftwaffe unexpected and devastating, and were the losses of Soviet aviation as great as Kremlin propaganda claims? Where did Stalin's sky armadas and the pre-war plans for the immediate conquest of air supremacy disappear? Why did hundreds and thousands of red-star planes froze forever at border airfields, which did not enter the battle? This book finally closes questions that have remained at the epicenter of fierce disputes for many decades.

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ANOTHER chronology of the catastrophe 1941. The fall of the "Stalin's falcons"

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Chapter 1 Gone with the Storm

From the moment of formation (August 1940) the Baltic military district was called "special". In many aspects, the history of hostilities in the Baltics has also become special and unique. Considering the events of the war in the air, we will begin with a brief overview of what happened on the ground in June 1941.

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1.1. "On the military operations of troops from 18 to 23 June…"

The North-Western Front, which was to be deployed at the base of the PribOVO troops, was the only one that was assigned purely defensive tasks in the upcoming war against Germany (at least at the initial stage of the war). The road from Riga and Vilnius to Berlin would have been extremely difficult: the defensive fortifications of East Prussia, built for centuries, the dense August forests, then the lakes and marshes of Mazovia, sadly remembered from the First World War, the full-flowing Vistula and Oder in their lower reaches. On such terrain, the Red Army inevitably lost its main "trump card" - a horde of thousands of light tanks. Already in the September (1940) version of the Strategic Deployment Plan of the Red Army, *"the difficult natural conditions of East Prussia, which make it extremely difficult to conduct offensive operations" and "the exceptional preparedness of this theater for defense, and especially in engineering and road relations," were noted.* On the basis of which the following conclusion was made : *"There are fears that the struggle on this front could lead to protracted battles, tie up our main forces and not give the desired and quick effect." (1)*

The conclusion about the futility of the offensive from the Baltic through East Prussia to the Vistula was tested and confirmed during the January (1941) operational-strategic Game on the cards [1] . As a result, in the March (1941) version of the Plan for the Strategic Deployment of the Red Army, the task of the North-Western Front was limited only to the following: " *Strong defense and pinning down enemy forces from Memel (now Klaipeda) to Ostroleka to ensure the main operations of the center." (2)* The same, purely defensive, tasks were assigned to the front in the May (1941) version of the Plan: *“Strongly cover the Riga and Vilna directions with stubborn defense, preventing the enemy from invading from East Prussia.” (3)*

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Another unique feature of the Baltic OVO was the logically inexplicable safety (accessibility, declassification) of the documents of the district command and its military formations for the last pre-war days. Nothing like this is observed in other districts / fronts; operational documents available to historians as spelled out begin on June 22 (or even later dates). By way of a very unsteady hypothesis, it can be assumed that this is due precisely to the fact that the troops of other districts (Western, Kiev, Odessa) from the very first days of the war had to solve tasks that were by no means defensive and their archival funds were largely classified and “cleansed” ". Be that as it may, but starting from June 18–20 (i.e., in the middle of the calendar year and 3–4 days before the “surprise attack”), operational documents (orders, combat reports, operational and reconnaissance reports) with

numbers 1, 2, 3 ...

“Operational report 1, shtadiv-48, forest 0.5 km east. Art. Dalbe 1. Fulfilling

the order, the division began the march from Riga at 23.00 on 17.6.41 and, having made a night march (30 km), by 9.00 on 18.6.41 concentrated in the forest southeast of the village. Dalbe…” (5)

“Combat report No. 2, shtadiv-48, forest southwest of st. Dalbe, 9.10 18.6.41

The division, having completed the task of the day, concentrated by 9.00 on 18.6.41 in the forest area southwest of st. Dalbe…” (6)

“To the heads of departments of headquarters and district departments. I

inform you for information that the headquarters of the armies have been given instructions on providing urgent reports on the following terms:

a) Operational reports by 7.00 as of 5.00, 14.00 as of 12.00, 19.00 as of 17.00 ... Deputy. Chief of Staff, Major General Trukhin. June 20, 1941 No. 01 (the type of document is not designated. - *M.S.)* ". (7)

"Reconnaissance report No. 01 by 14.00 21.6.41, NWF headquarters, Panevezys

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Reliable data as of 18.6.41 established ... ” (29) The report was signed by the deputy chief of the regional headquarters of the district headquarters, but it was addressed to the chief of staff of the air force **of the front!**

Intelligence report No. 02 by 20.00 21.6.41, headquarters of PribOVO, Panevezys
According to reliable data, continues
the concentration of German troops in East Prussia ... " (8)

Opersvodka No. 01 to 22.0021.6.41, headquarters of PribOVO, forest 12 km from Panevezys village

First. Units and formations of the Baltic Special Military District in the points of permanent deployment are engaged in combat and political training ... " (9)

Order on SUV No. 01 Headquarters of the NWF, Panevezys, 12.00 21.6.41 1. To carry out encrypted communication in accordance with special instructions.
2. Do not use coded communication. 3. To
disguise unclassified negotiations and call the command staff for negotiations on technical means of communication, use: a) in the STAFRONT-SHTARM network, the negotiation table OPT-2 ... " (10)

SUV is "covert command and control of troops." The most remarkable thing in this document is not even the number 01 in the middle of the year, but the fact that over the letters "NWF" and "FRONT", made, like the entire document, on a typewriter, with a brown pencil (maybe it was red 70 years ago) in bold written: "OKR". The signature under the document was also corrected - the chief of staff of the NWF, Lieutenant General Klenov, was “repainted” with the same pencil as the chief of staff of the ROC. In order to see all this, it is not even necessary to go to Podolsk, to the Central Archive of the Moscow Region, - an electronic copy of the document is presented for public viewing on the website "Feat of the People".

A few hours later, at 16.45 on June 21, on behalf of the Chief of Staff of the North-Western Front, Lieutenant General P. Klenov (in fact, the document was signed by the Chief of the Operational Department of the Staff, Major General F. Trukhin), all the heads of departments of the headquarters and district administrations were announced the following on receipt order:

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“Some unit headquarters and departments of the district administration in documents and conversations use the words “FRONT”, NWF, etc., which divulge the place and presence of the front administration. Immediately stop this phenomenon and continue to call the headquarters and management PribOVO. (11) One can guess

about the presence of a front-line administration, **created a few days BEFORE the “surprise attack”,** from the mere appearance of documents with numbers 1, 2, 3 in the middle of the year. No less remarkable is the requirement to provide three Opersvodki per day (this does not happen in peacetime), and the appearance of documents called "combat report". However, the document cited above is extremely important to others - it shows that the meaning and significance of the deployment on the basis of the front district was quite clear to the commanders involved; they clearly understood what this meant and why such a secret could not be trusted even with papers adorned with the stamps "Secret" and encrypted telephone lines. The extreme conspiracy reached the point that on June 21, 1941, the head of the Political Propaganda Directorate of the Baltic OVO, Comrade Ryabchiy, ordered: *“Do not give written directives to the political propaganda departments of the corps and divisions; set the tasks of political work orally through their representatives.* (31)

It is worth paying attention to the location of the headquarters of the newly appeared front. Since at least June 21 (the headquarters of the Air Force has been there since the evening of June 20) - this is a forest northeast of the city of Panevezys. It was there, in accordance with the Cover Plan, that the headquarters of the North-Western Front was to be located *"6 hours after the start of the war or the announcement of mobilization." (12)* Which of these two events happened 6 hours before the headquarters of the newly formed front moved from Riga to the forest near Panevezys? Mobilization (open mobilization) was announced by the Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Armed Forces not even from June 22, but from June 23. Perhaps, for the secretly created North-Western Front, the war began a few days before the morning of June

Agree, such an assumption looks like a cheap “conspiracy theory”, however, on the first page of the document stored in TsAMO (fond 221, inventory 1351, file 201), we can read the following incredible text: “From the combat log of the troops of the North-Western Front about the situation, *situation*

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and combat operations of the troops from June 18 to June 23, 1941. And on the next page of this document, the first time interval in the description of "combat actions" is designated as "18.21.6". And this document is available in a very high quality electronic copy for everyone…

No less eloquent is the content of the documents of the PribOVO headquarters, issued with the "old", multi-valued numbering. Here, for example, is the order of the commander of the 12th MK, Major General Shestopalov No. 0033 dated June 18, 1941. The document is stamped "Top Secret. Of particular importance", which is a rarity for corpus-level documents. Order No. 0033 begins with these words: *"With the receipt of this order, put all units on alert. Put the units on alert in accordance with the plans for raising a combat alert, but do not announce the alarm itself ... Take with you only what is necessary for life and battle ... "Then there is an instruction to start* moving to the concentration areas at 23.00 on June 18, and all the final points of the routes are located in forests! (13)

On the same eventful day on June 18, the commander of the PribOVO, Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov, signs a lengthy, multi-page Order No. 00229. There, in particular,
says:

"... To the head of the air defense zone, ***by the end of June 19, 1941*** (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me. - *M.S.) to bring the entire air defense of the district to full combat readiness ...* ***By 19.6.41 ,*** *report on the order of cover from dive bombers of large railway and earth bridges, artillery depots and critical facilities.* ***Until 21.6.41 ,*** *together with the local air defense, to organize: the blackout of the cities of Riga, Kaunas,*

Vilnius, Dvinsk, Mitava, Libava, Siauliai, firefighting in them ... Not later than the morning of 20.6.41, ***throw*** *out teams at the front and army command posts with the necessary property to organize communication centers on them ... Outline and prepare teams of signalmen who should be ready* ***by the morning of 20.6.41,*** *by order of the commanders of the formations, to take control of the communication centers approved by me ... Determine in the sector of each army the points for organizing field depots of anti-tank mines, explosives*

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substances and anti-personnel barriers. To concentrate the indicated property in organized warehouses ***by 21.6.41 ...*** *To create mobile detachments of mine anti-tank combat in the Telsiai, Siauliai, Kaunas and Kalvary directions. For this purpose, to have stocks of anti-tank mines transported by road. The readiness of the detachments* ***on 21.6.41 ...*** *The plan for the destruction of bridges was approved by the Military Councils of the armies. Deadline* ***21.6.41 ...*** *Select all gas tanks from the parts of the district (except mechanized and aviation) and transfer them 50% each to the 3rd and 12th mechanized corps. The deadline for completion* ***is 21.6.41 ... Until 23.6.41,*** *supply the units with everything laid down according to the*

time sheets ... " (14) The aviation units of the Baltic District did not lag behind the infantry. In the report “On the combat activities of the 86th air base from 22.6 to 28.6” we read: *“20 and 21 6.41. Construction of fortifications according to the defense plan.* ***21.6.41 at 22.00*** *the occupation of defensive structures by the composition of the regiment and the base for the defense of the airfield. Completion of work on backfilling and digging of fuel and lubricants stored in barrels ... " (30)* Report" On the work done at the 213th air base from 17.6 to 28.6.41 " quite casually states: *“When the combat alert was announced* ***by the end of the day on June 21, 1941*** (emphasized by me. - *M.S.), the following property*

was concentrated at the Karmelava operational airfield ...” (34) It is simply amazing how Soviet historians / propagandists who composed and those who replicated the myth about the People's Commissar of the Navy, Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov, who allegedly "was not afraid to violate Stalin's ban and put the fleet on alert on the eve of the war," did not drop a single kind word about a similar "feat" of General F. I. Kuznetsov. Or was the assignment for one myth about one Kuznetsov? In any case, the commander of PribOVO did not violate any “Stalin’s prohibitions”, rather, on the contrary, to the best of his understanding and the organizational abilities of his subordinates, he tried to fulfill the instructions he receiv

On June 11, 1941, exactly a week before the events began in PribOVO, in the military language referred to as “operational deployment of troops”, the commander of PribOVO F. I. Kuznetsov and a member of the Military Council of the district P. A. Dibrova ended up in Moscow. And not just in Moscow, but in Stalin's office, where at that moment they were:

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Deputy Prime Minister and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Molotov, People's Commissar for Defense Tymoshenko, Chief of the General Staff Zhukov, People's Commissar for State Security Merkulov, Head of Glavpur Zaporozhets. Such an event can hardly be called a "meeting" - Kuznetsov and Dibrova were not at the right rung of the administrative ladder to give "advice" to the country's top military-political leadership; most likely, it was a briefing, and quite detailed (it lasted from 21.55 to 22.55).

It should be noted that from May 24 (that mysterious day when the commanders, PMCs and aviation commanders of all five western border districts were gathered in Stalin's office - for the first and only time in the entire 41st year) and until the start of the war, precisely and only PribOVO became the district whose command had a meeting with Stalin. This strange fact can be given many different interpretations, for example: meetings (briefings) with the command of the most significant fronts in the planned strategic operation (Southwestern and Western) were scheduled for a later date (i.e., as close as possible to the day the invasion of Europe began) term; the war that began with the "treacherous" attack of Germany mixed up all calendar plans, and these meetings never took place (the commander of the Western Front, General of the Army Pavlov, would be shot, the commander of the Southwestern Front, Kirponos, would die in the Kiev "cauldron"). The Baltic OVO was

geographically located on the territories “liberated from the yoke of capital”. There is nothing unique in this - the troops of all five western border districts were fully or partially deployed on those annexed in 1939-1940. lands. However, it was only in the Baltic States that an extremely strange decision was made and implemented: to include six divisions (three corps) in the district troops, formed on the basis of the troops of the liquidated states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). There was nothing like it anywhere else, and it’s hard to imagine a “Polish division” as part of the KOVO or a “Finnish brigade” in the Leningrad Military District. And after all, what is interesting is that exactly 13 months before the execution, D. G. Pavlov warned the high command against such a rash step:

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“I consider the existence of units of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian armies in one place impossible. I make the following suggestions:

First. Disarm the armies of all 3 states and take weapons to the Soviet Union. Secondly, or

after cleaning the officers and strengthening the units by our command staff, I admit the possibility at first - in the near future - to use units of the Lithuanian and Estonian armies outside the Belarusian OVO for war, approximately - against the Romanians, Afghans and Japanese. In all cases, I consider it necessary to completely disarm the Letts…” (15)

Pavlov was not listened to. As a result, already in the first hours of the war (at 9.35 on June 22, 1941), the commander of the PribOVO reported to the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR that he was forced to instruct the 5th Panzer Division "to cover the rear of the 11th Army *from the Lithuanians",* and the "national" 179, 181, 183, 184 rifle divisions *are "absolutely unreliable." (16)* Strange. What prevented you from making such a correct conclusion at least at 9 o'clock in the evening of the previous day? However, there is reason to assume that the main problem was not the need for an urgent withdrawal of "national" divisions from the combat zone, and not even an armed rebellion that began in the very first days of the war in Kaunas, Riga and other Baltic cities. The heaviest blow to the political morale (“political and moral state”) of the PribOVO troops was inflicted by the very fact of their one-year (and some units and formations had been there since October

1939) stay on the territory of “bourgeois states”. The Red Army soldiers from the Russian villages devastated by the "collectivization" were staggeringly impressed even by shops in such a provincial outback of Eastern Europe as Bialystok, Brest, Kovel, Chisinau ... But the Baltic states of the 30s are not Chisinau at all. It must be admitted that under the leadership of harsh authoritarian regimes, the young Baltic states have achieved tremendous economic success, and countries such as Latvia and (to a lesser extent) Estonia have reached a very worthy Western European level in terms of the level and quality of life of the population. To show this to the fighters and commanders of the Red A

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mistake. The stunted sprouts of the "Bolshevik consciousness" could not withstand such a blow:

“An officer and his wife were assigned to stay with us. Either a senior lieutenant or a captain. I don't remember now, just like his last name. They called him Nicholas. Young and nice people. This officer received a cash salary of a thousand rubles, which in the first months was equated to lats in a ratio of one to one. With the then average salary of a worker of 80 lats per month, Nikolai practically received a fortune with a full abundance of goods in stores. When he was walking home from work, he ran into a pastry shop on the way and bought a box of twenty cakes for 1 ruble (lat). Naturally, he and his wife could not eat more than five or six, and there was no point in leaving it for tomorrow. So they fed our chickens with the remaining cakes (mother scolded them very much for this) ...

Nikolai's wife, like all the wives of Soviet commanders, bought men's and women's watches, gold and stone items and took them to the USSR, to the city of Kiev, where there were no such goods, and they could be sold for any money. She brought back cash, and everything was repeated exponentially ... A few months later, both their rooms and the corridor were forced by the tenants with plywood boxes with a variety of goods. Everything was bought in a row: shoes for all seasons and for the rest of life, leather and drape coats and jackets, manufactory in rolls, men's suits and women's dresses innumerable, bed and underwear uncounted. And in the shops the goods did not decrease ... ” These memoirs of my father, a native of the town of

Karsava (Latvia), were sent to me by my namesake Mark Heidenreich. Here is another fragment of memories from another veteran: *“Our regiment was stationed in Libau*

(Liepaja). They gave me a luxurious apartment, one might say, apartments, but no furniture. Went shopping with my wife. We went to the store, and there is such a choice that the eyes run wide. At first they thought that it was very expensive and there was not enough money to pay off. Priced. Pennies, not the price. We chose a five-room suite made of Karelian birch. We paid, and literally right there the movers brought it and placed it all over the apartment. Less than a month later, my wife, walking around the city, again went into the same furniture store and saw such a luxury

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from mahogany, which I could not resist and bought. I come from work, and all over the house there is new chic furniture. To your question: "Where did the old one go?" - received a completely logical answer: "The loaders took it to the

trash ..." Of course, the party educational work with the personnel did not subside for a day, but to inspire the Red Army soldiers that they must give their only life in order to "liberate" some other country from cakes and headsets, it became more and more difficult. The beginning of the war in the Baltic states in the memoirs of Heidenreich looks like this:

"I left home early in the morning, without really saying goodbye to my family, on the very first day of the war. We drove a large herd of cows to the east. Major NKVD Blinov organized us. At about three o'clock in the morning, his brother, who served on the border, called him and said, over the still perfectly working connection, that the Germans, without meeting any resistance, passed through them. "Wait, brother, you will soon." This is how all Karsava learned about the outbreak of the war. About an hour later, German bombers swooped in and bombed communications centers and a bridge a kilometer from the house. Blinov did not receive any order from anyone, but he decided to save at least something

from the Germans ... They each gave us a rifle and ten rounds of ammunition, taught us how to load, assemble, disassemble, and clean. We reached the border with the USSR (RSFSR) in Golyshevo. It's a terrible mess. The border with "brotherly Latvia" was closed all this year, and the order to open it was not received. Major for a pistol: "Your mother, it's necessary to drive the breeding cattle to the east!" - and the border guards also have rifles. In the end, the authorities came to their senses and ordered the collective farmers to be brought from

the nearest village to pick up the cattle. It was some kind of horror! Despite the hot summer day, men and women in dirty, torn padded jackets came. On the legs are some kind of supports, bast shoes. It is impossible to distinguish men from women. The faces are black, chewed, with toothless, sunken mouths. Everyone stinks terribly. Many are drunk. They smoke smelly self-garden, wrapping it in a newspaper. We have never seen anything like this, such poverty and slavery. These were people not from another country - from another planet. On us, on the war that had just

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absolutely don't care. They hated with fierce hatred "their own", i.e. collective farms, cows, the collective farm itself, Comrade Stalin and his "Soviet power", which brought them to such a life ...

By that time, the Germans had blocked the main Warsaw-Leningrad road, and the crowd, distraught with fear, rushed to our frontier post. This crowd consisted of party workers at all levels and the surviving leaders of the NKVD and the police. This I, as a witness, categorically declare. All this pack was draping with such tremendous force that it crushed the border, as if the border guards had never been there ... "

Of course, the memories of one of the ordinary witnesses of the events can be called "biased", "one-sided", "atypical". However, what was described above completely coincides with the entry dated June 23, 1941 in the Journal of Combat Operations (ZhBD) of the German Army Group North: “For a whole day, the enemy evaded the battle *and, under the cover of more or less strong rearguards, continued to withdraw.” (59)* On the same day, June 23, by no means a “private”, but the chief of the General Staff of the Wehrmacht, Colonel General F. Halder, writes in his famous diary: “Local

transfers of ground troops and aircraft [of the enemy] are forced and undertaken under the *influence advances of our troops, and do not represent an organized withdrawal with specific goals. So far, there seems to be no need to talk about such an organized withdrawal. The exception is, perhaps, the area in front of the front of Army Group North, where, apparently, a withdrawal beyond the Western Dvina River was indeed planned and prepared in advance. The reasons for this preparation cannot yet be established.” (17)* Let's not be too strict with the

"beaten Hitler general." Our Soviet historians, even for half a century, have not been able to establish the "reasons for such preparation" ...

On June 26, 1941, having covered 300 km in four days, Manstein's 56th motorized (tank) corps captured Daugavpils (Dvinsk) and the bridge across the Daugava (Western Dvina). By the end of June, the strategic line of the Daugava River was taken by the Germans all the way from Daugavpils to Riga. The task that, according to the conditions of the pre-war command and staff games, the “Western” had to

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to solve in a month (and that the "Eastern" ones - according to the results of the same "games" - of course, were not allowed), in practice it was solved in a week. The stubborn resistance of disparate units and subunits of the 2nd Panzer Division, the 9th Anti-tank Artillery Brigade, the 12th and 21st Mechanized Corps could only slow down the triumphal march of the Wehrmacht across the Baltic states for a few days or hours. As for the headquarters of the North-Western Front, on June 29 it “relocated” to Pskov and on July 5

to Novgorod. On June 26, in the Daugavpils region, the head of the Operations Department of the S-Z.f. Headquarters surrendered. Major General Trukhin (later Trukhin actively collaborated with the Germans, headed the headquarters of the Vlasov "army" and ended his life on the gallows on August 1, 1946). The chief of staff of the front, Lieutenant General Klenov, and the commander of the Air Force of the front, Major General Ionov, were arrested in the summer of 1941 and later shot. On July 5, 1941, under the signature of Lieutenant General Vatutin, who took over as Chief of Staff of the Northwestern Front (on the eve of the war, Head of the Operational Directorate, Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army), an “Instruction on Combating Enemy Tanks” was issued, in which it was prescribed to “harvest *dirt -clay, which is thrown into the viewing slots of the tank.* (18) The troops of the front had to throw mud and clay, which - according to quite official data of modern Russian military historians - from June 22 to July 9, 1941, was able to lose 2523 tanks, 3560 guns and mortars, 341 thousand small arms. (19, p. 368)

On the eve of the war, there were 5 air divisions in the Air Force of the Baltic OVO (the future North-Western Front). Four of the five were deployed in the strip from the border to the river. Daugava, i.e. in Lithuania and southwestern Latvia. In the depths of the territory of the district, in Estonia, at a distance of 500 - 600 km from the border, there was the 4th mixed (according to the actual composition - rather a bomber) air division. We note right away that there was no trace of any “aircraft basing at the border posts”. The main aviation forces of the PribOVO were relatively evenly distributed in the 300 km zone from the border to the Daugava River. Only two (of

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58) airfields - Nemayutsai and Perlon - were closer than 50 km from

the border. On the contrary, the enemy, as well as on other sectors of the Eastern Front, used a very small number of airfields[2] and brought his aircraft as close as possible to the zone of future hostilities. Its fighter groups were based no further than 15-20 km from the border, and the II / JG-27 group at the Berzniki airfield in the "Suwalki ledge" was indeed located a few kilometers from the "border pillars" and theoretically could be subjected to conventional divisional artillery fire . Even bomber squadrons in East Prussia were deployed no further than 20-30 minutes. flying at cruising speed from the border: KG 76 in the Gerdauen area (now the village of Zheleznodorozhny), 120 km to the border and KG 77 in the

Heiligenbeil area (now Mamonovo), 160 km to the border. According to the most minimal estimate (not counting the emerging "200th" air regiments and not taking into account the presence in the Novgorod region of the 1st long-range aviation corps, i.e. two air divisions, which were armed with 274 bombers), the Soviet Air Force grouping in the Baltic area consisted of 17 air regiments **(8 bombers, 8 fighters, 1 assault), 790 combat-ready crews, at least 870 serviceable combat aircraft** (340 bombers, 530 fighters and attack aircraft). Which is quite a lot - not only in comparison with the strength of the enemy (1st Air Force of the Luftwaffe, 8 air groups, about 350 combat-ready aircraft), but also in comparison with the aviation forces of other border districts. In particular, the PribOVO Air Force in all quantitative indicators

surpassed the Air Force of the Odessa District, whose troops in the future war were not assigned defensive tasks at all. Somewhat exaggerating, we can say that the PribOVO Air Force was "disproportionately large" in relation to the very modest defensive tasks assigned to the troops of the district. This "disproportion" can be explained both by the general irrationality of m

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Prussia was the “far frontier” of the air defense of Leningrad, the most important center of the USSR military industry at that time.

The combat composition and deployment of the PribOVO Air Force are presented in the following table 1:

Table 1

4-я САД 108б.+ 43и., 184 эк.	**35-й БАП** Тарту, Выхма 42/5, 46	**50-й БАП** Хаапсалу 43/3, 46	**63-й БАП** Куусику 44/4, 48	**38-й ИАП** Таллин, 61/16, 52
6-я САД 109б.+ 96и., 205 эк.	**31-й БАП** Митава, Платоне 56/8, 43	**40-й БАП** Виндава, Пилтене 54/11, 47	**21-й ИАП** Рига 64/8, 53	**148-й ИАП** Либава 68/9, 36
7-я САД 88б.+ 92и., 132 эк.	**9-й БАП** Паневежис 55/3, 47	**46-й БАП** Шауляй, Грузджяй 56/?, 42	**10-й ИАП** Шауляй, Немакщай 55/21, 50	**238-й ИАП** Паневежис 30/?, 9
8-я САД 64ш.+ 128и., 132 эк.	**15-й ИАП** Каунас, Поцунай 84/? 56	**31-й ИАП** Каунас, Кармелава 53/?, 54	**61-й ШАП** Кейданы, Макштава 66/2, 57	**240-й ИАП** Россиены 13/? 8
57-я САД 39б.+ 107и., 137 эк.	**54-й БАП** Вильнюс, Кивишки 55/10, 54-28?	**42-й ИАП** Ораны, Перлоя 79/13, 59-31?	**49-й ИАП** Двинск-Ликсна 63/?, 61	**237-й ИАП** Ораны 13-27?, 13

Notes: - the

numbers in the divisions column indicate: the number of serviceable bomber aircraft + the number of serviceable fighter aircraft, the number of combat-ready crews; all data from the Operations Report of the PribOVO Air Force Headquarters as of June 21, 1941;

- the numbers in the columns of the air regiments indicate: the number of aircraft / incl. out of order, the number of flight crews; data are given from air documents corresponding to the regiments And divisions, arithmetic sum of aircraft and crews by regiments does not match the data in the divisions column; - the names of the

settlements correspond to those adopted in the documents of the 41st year: Mitava (now Jelgava), Vindava (now Ventspils), Libava (now Liepaja), Keidany (now Kedainiai),

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Rossiens (now Raseiniai), Orany (now Varena), Dvinsk (now Daugavpils).

As in all such cases, the figures presented in Table 1 can serve only for the most general, indicative and minimal (!) Assessment of the real size of the Soviet Air Force grouping. It is hardly possible in principle to establish anything exactly. Different documents, sometimes drawn up on the same day, but in different command instances, or issued by the same headquarters, but on different days with an interval of a couple of weeks, give quantitative indicators that differ by 20, 30 or more percent. Accounting for combat aircraft - complex, expensive and extremely scarce equipment in the war - was worse than accounting for spent cartridges in a shooting range. As always, the main confusion in the reporting is made by a huge number of “old-type fighters”, which the command of the air units hastened to stop considering combat materiel, as soon as the hope of getting new MiGs and Yaks loomed on the horizon. Accordingly, in various documents relating to the 57th SAD, one can find both 168 and 107 fighters; in the 8th GARDEN there are 316, and 215, and 192 aircraft. And then there are still some *“21 I-15 bis being mothballed”* and *“13 of the best SB aircraft on the eve of the war were transferred from the division to the flight school.” (20)*

Operational report No. 2 of the headquarters of the 57th SAD dated 20.00 on June 20, 1941 states that *“the following number of defective aircraft is: 42nd IAP - no, 49th IAP - 5.54 BAP-th - 10".* (21) On the next page of the same document, it is reported that *"by the end of the day, 57 fighters were on alert."* Report No. 3 (by 12.00 on June 21) states that "there are no [changes] *in the combat composition and provision of the CAD with ammunition and fuel and lubricants ." (22)* A task for a first-grader: how many fighter aircraft were in the division if 57 were in good condition and 5 were listed as out of order? Operational report No. 03 of the headquarters of the PribOVO Air Force (compiled at 17.00 on June 21) reports that in the 57th SAD only in the list of "serviceable materiel" are 107 fighter aircraft. (23) Judging by the signing on August 2 - i.e. already after the defeat of the division - the report "Final information about the combat work of the units of the 57th SAD", on June 21 *"the materiel of the division consisted of 210 combat aircraft",* inc

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134 fighters. (24) The statistical collection “Soviet Aviation in the Second World War in Figures”, well-known to specialists, with reference to documents from the archive fund of the Main Staff of the Red Army Air Force, reports that as of June 1, 1941, only two fighter regiments of the 57th SAD had 150 serviceable and 18 defective aircraft. (25) And so on ... I hope the attentive reader has already noticed and appreciated

the numbers of orders and operational reports issued on June 20 - 21, 1941. Their content is no less interesting:

“Order No. 1 / OP, headquarters of the 7th SAD,

Siauliai, 20.6.41. Siauliai city… For each department and service at the RFQ, have a minimum number of secret paperwork documents to ensure work on a special assignment. The personnel department does not take personal files ... " (32)

"Ex. No. 03, 21.6.41 To the chiefs of staff of the

regiments 1. Based on the report card of the PribOVO Air Force Headquarters I establish the following order of submission of reports ...

2. In operational reports, cover the following issues in the prescribed manner: a) the nature of

hostilities or combat training; b) losses and depletion of

ammunition ... Chief of Staff of the 8th SAD

Colonel Glukhoe 21.6.41. (34)

“Operational report No. 2, headquarters of the 57th SAD, Vilnius, by

20.00 on 20.6.41, 57th SAD during 20.6 continued to camouflage aircraft, transport ammunition and fuel to operational airfields ... At the airfields of Orana, Kryzhaki, Dvinsk, one [squadron] is in *combat readiness…” (21)*

“Operational report No. 01 by 17.00 on 20.6.41, the headquarters of the PribOVO Air Force, Panevezys

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1. During June 20, 1941, Air Force units were relocated to operational airfields, dispersed and camouflaged materiel at airfields. 2. During 20.6.41, the Air Force units did not conduct military

operations (this phrase was crossed out with a pen; below it is written in the same ink: " *Each regiment has one squadron in readiness No. 2, the rest are engaged in combat training").*

3. Air Force units are deployed ... (the following is a list of regiments and aerodromes, this information is shown in Table No. 1 above).

4. Air Force units are dispersed at operational airfields in combat readiness No. 2 (this phrase is repeatedly crossed out with a pen, instead of it, *"contains one squadron of the regiment"). Chief of Staff of the Air Force PribOVO Brigade*

Commander Krupin Head of the Operations Department

Lieutenant Colonel Korepanov " (26)

"Operational report No. 02 by 5.00 21.6.41, the headquarters of the PribOVO Air Force, Panevezys

1. During the night of June 21, 1941, Air Force units did not conduct combat operations; in each regiment, one squadron is on combat readiness No. 2. The rest are engaged in combat training. 2. Deployment of units unchanged (see report No.

01) Chief of Staff of the PribOVO Air Force Commander Krupin Head

of the Operations Department Lieutenant Colonel Korepanov

" (27)

Opersvodka No. 03 by 17.00 on June 21 actually repeats the previous one in content. There are no changes in the deployment of units, the materiel is camouflaged at airfields, *"in each regiment, one squadron is on duty in readiness No. 2." (28)* No sensationalism. There were no hostilities on 20 and 21 June. True, this statement did not seem so

unambiguous when the headquarters of the Air Force of the North-Western Front (which was forbidden to call itself a "front" in written documents) took the place assigned to it according to the Cover Plan at a field command post in the forest near Panevezys. The next in a row (more correctly, the next of those preserved in the archival fund of the Air Force Directorate of the North-Western

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front) The operational report, signed by brigade commander Krupin and lieutenant colonel Korepanov, was released at 19.00 on June 22. Contrary to simple logic, it has the number ... 03, although it should have been at least the fourth, and given the very likely presence of the morning report for June 22 (after all, but this morning an event worth mentioning happened) - the fifth. But that's not all! The third Opersvodka No. 3 was released at 8:00 am on June 24, and it was signed by other persons in another place. The third report No. 3 was compiled in Riga, signed by the deputy chief of staff, Colonel Rasskazov and the head of the operational department of the headquarters, Colonel Samokhin, and this headquarters calls itself the "NWF Air Force Headquarters." On the evening of June 24, the headquarters of the brigade commander Krupin, located in Panevezys (at least, as it is written in the document), this time also calling itself the headquarters of the Front Air Force, issues Opersvodka No. 06, and the “Riga headquarters of Colonel Rasskazov” issues Opersvodka with the same number on behalf of the "Front Air Force Headquarters" at 20.00 26
June...

What was it? It is clear that all this wild confusion in the documents reflects the process of the formation of the North-Western Front on the basis of the headquarters and troops of the Baltic OVO in a situation where the schedule planned in Moscow was disrupted by the sudden intervention of Berlin. However, the very procedure of this creation raises many questions. For some reason, the geography of the deployment of headquarters has been violated exactly the opposite. The command post placed on the front line (in the forest near Panevÿžys) calls itself the “district air force headquarters”, while the structure that remains in the rear, at the place of the pre-war deployment of the district headquarters (Riga), calls itself the “front headquarters”. The normal subordination has been violated: in wartime, the front headquarters is “higher” than the headquarters of the district (that is, in fact, the rear structure), however, brigade commander (which corresponds to major general) Krupin and commander major general Ionov, until the morning of June 23, sign as chiefs of the district air force , and Colonel Rasskazov, in the position of deputy chief of staff, signs the documents of the FRONT headquarters. It is also strange that the “district air force headquarters” issues Opersvodki much more often than the “front air force headquarters”, although in war it should have been exactly the opposite.

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Of course, a possible explanation for all this can only be the extremely low level of clerical culture of the headquarters of the Red Army of that time. And yet it is hard not to notice how the generals and colonels named above were drawn into a certain “game” started in the Kremlin, the specific meaning of which no one explained to them. In any case, one thing is clear - in relation to the Baltic district, there can be no question of any "sudden attack on peacefully sleeping airfields". At least two days before the actual start of hostilities, the Air Force units were put on high alert, dispersed at operational airfields, and received an order to disperse and disguise combat materiel. Readiness duty No. 2, as reported in the operational reports for June 20-21, is readiness to take off on alarm within 3-4 minutes. In such a situation, only the crushing defeat that happened to the Air Force of the North-Western Front can be considered unexpected and sudden in such a situation.

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1.2. First hit

The first blow in the zone of the Baltic OVO (as, indeed, in other sectors of the Soviet-German front) was inflicted by the Germans. In the predawn haze of the morning of June 22, under a warm summer rain, hundreds of combat aircraft of the 1st Luftwaffe Air Fleet broke away from the runways of East Prussian airfields and headed northeast. The 1st Air

Fleet included a fairly powerful group of bomber aircraft: 8 air groups (not counting the so-called "coastal" group KGr-806, which was operationally subordinate to the fleet command and did not take part in hostilities in the Baltic states in June 41) , which were armed with 240 Junkers-88, of which about 192 vehicles (80%) were in combat readiness. As you can see, a characteristic feature of the bomber forces of the 1st V.f. there was a high (by the standards of the Luftwaffe of the 41st model) percentage of combat readiness and complete uniformity of combat vehicles, and this only type was the best German Ju-88 bomber at that time. Fighter forces of the 1st V.f. consisted of three air groups of the JG-54

squadron and one group (II / JG-53) of the 53 squadron (judging by most sources, the group was incomplete - only two, 4 and 5 squadrons). In total, 164 fighter aircraft (131 in combat readiness) were based at the border airfields of East Prussia, and all the Messers were the latest modification of the Bf-109F. In addition, in the so-called. "Suwalki ledge", at the airfields of Suwalki, Sobolevo, Berzhniki, fighter units of the 2nd Air Fleet were deployed, a total of five air groups: III / JG-53, II / JG-52, II (Sch.) / LG-2, headquarters and two group (II / JG-27, III / JG 27) of the 27th squadron. In general, it should be noted that such a concentration of aviation forces, as in the strip between Tilsit

and Suwalki, was nowhere else along the entire length of the Eastern Front. And although the 2nd Air Fleet (including the four fighter groups mentioned above) was operationally subordinate to the command of Army Group Center, in the first

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during the war, his air group, operating at the junction of the Western and Baltic districts (i.e., the Western and North-Western fronts of the Red Army), also took part in the battle that unfolded in the sky and at the airfields of southern Lithuania.

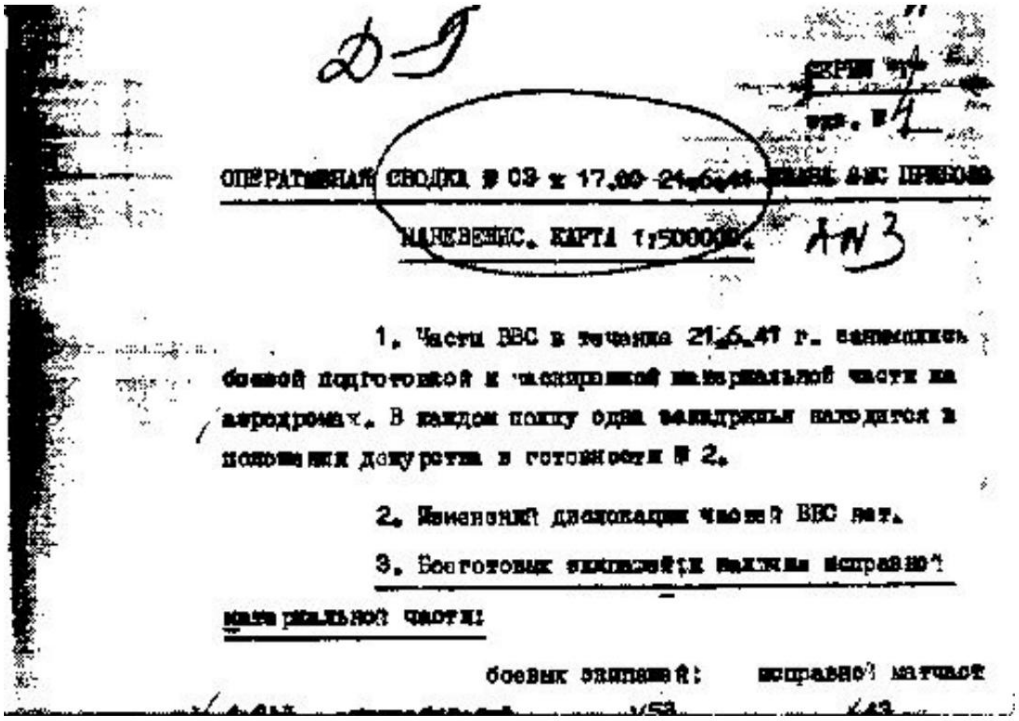
The forces at the disposal of the Luftwaffe command were significant, but they were used very poorly in the first hours of the war ("weak" in comparison with how the German Air Force acted that day in the skies of Belarus). At noon on June 22, Intelligence Report No. 03 of the headquarters of the North-Western Front states verbatim the following: *"The enemy has not yet brought into action significant air forces, limited to the action of individual groups and single aircraft." (35)* In the morning (at 8.10) of the same day, surprise at the unexpected absence of the expected thousands of enemy aircraft in the air materialized in the following order: *"From Riga. Commander of the 7th SAD. Hand over immediately. The commander ordered to save fighter aircraft to repel a powerful enemy air raid. Spend carefully. A raid by a large group is expected ... " (36)* In the afternoon of June 22, the assessment of the

number of enemy aircraft entered into battle became somewhat more specific. Colonel Samokhin (from the "Riga headquarters") reports by telegraph (the addressee is not indicated on the telegram form) the following: " *From 04.15 to 13.00, groups of up to 40 aircraft and single aircraft with a total number of over 150 aircraft attacked airfields ...* (followed by a list)» . (37) It is possible that in the turmoil of the first day of the war, not all enemy aircraft overflights were recorded, not all reports were received by the front air force headquarters, and the above figure should be increased by 2-3 times, but even with this assumption it turns out that the Germans (taking into account the units of the 2nd Air Fleet operating in the NWF) performed on average no more than one sortie per day on a serviceable aircraft. The results of

the first enemy raids noted in the documents of the Soviet headquarters are not impressive either. Opersvodka No. 1 / OP of the "Riga Headquarters" of the *Air* Force of ***the Front*** by 17.00 on June 22 fixes only the *following* losses : *11 soldiers were wounded, 8 were killed and*

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7 construction workers were injured. In air battles, when repelling enemy raids, 9 of our aircraft were shot down ... " (38) Similar figures are also given in Opersvodka No. 03 / OP by 19.00 on June 22, issued by the" forest headquarters in Panevezys "signed by the chief of staff of the district air force / front brigade commander Krupin: *" Total losses for 22.6.41 in the PribOVO Air Force: 35 bombers, 30 fighters; 5 killed, 45 wounded. Losses are being specified.* (39)



Operational summary of the headquarters of the Air Force of the Baltic OVO, evening 21 June 1941

With all the reservations that this information needs to be clarified, it is quite obvious that the front air force headquarters did not record any "defeat of aviation on the ground". The total number of disabled aircraft (and many of them were still repairable!) Is **less than one tenth of the original number.** It is noteworthy that even the Germans (Journal of Combat Actions of the Army Group North, entry dated June 22, 1941), who repeatedly overestimated - as always and everywhere it happened - the number of enemy aircraft destroyed in the air and on the ground, were by no means in a hurry to report on complete destruction of aviation

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Baltic District: *"Of the 750 enemy aircraft planned in this area, 185 were destroyed." (60)*

The retaliatory strike of the bomber aviation of the North-Western Front was not long in coming. There is still a lot of uncertainty in this story, some circumstances of the events will never be clarified (both due to the loss of many documents of the front, and due to the extreme inconsistency and sometimes irrationality of the actions of the top military-political leadership of the USSR), however, the general conclusion can already be drawn now: on June 22, 1941, the Germans did not receive such a blow as the bombers of the Baltic OVO inflicted on the enemy on any other sector of the Eastern Front. From this point on, our presentation will begin to move

even further away from the classical version of Soviet historiography, in which untrained boys gathered at the “peacefully sleeping airfields” destroyed by a devastating surprise strike by German aircraft near the burning wreckage of aircraft “with a flight time of 5 hours“ in a box ”; the boys are eager to fight, but the sinister "Beria satraps", waving a TT pistol, demand to observe a certain "Stalin's ban" and not to open fire on the enemy. The reality was much more complicated. On April 1 (it just so happened), 1941, the head of the 1st Directorate of the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air

Force, Nikitin, signed the “Brief Conclusions on the Combat Training of Bomber Aviation Units”. (41) This document, as well as the few surviving archival funds of the regiments, make it possible to specifically assess the level of flight training of the crews of the Air Force of the Baltic OVO. So, in the 9th BAP (7th SAD, Panevezys airfield), the average flight time of a pilot on a SB bomber was 150 hours. The command staff had much higher flight practice. The regiment commander, Major M. I. Skitev, flew on the Security Council (not counting the raid on all previous training and combat vehicles!) 293 hours, the squadron commanders flew on the Security Council, respectively, 326, 210, 243, 255, 268 hours. Such are the "yellow-mouthed chicks" ... Here

costs note one important feature of the bomber aircraft of that time. If the air combat of fighters - despite the importance of choosing the optimal

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tactics of group actions and mutual support in battle - eventually broke up into separate fights, in each of which the fighter pilot had to shoot and maneuver individually, the so-called. "horizontal" bombers acted differently. Determination of the object of attack, laying the route, choosing the optimal height, speed, anti-aircraft maneuver, direction of approach to the target - all these tasks, in the vast majority of cases, were solved at the level of the squadron commander, if not the regiment commander. From the ordinary pilot it was required to take off, take the place indicated to him in the group, not to break away from the group, at the signal of the leader, press the bomb release button. 150 hours of combat training raid was enough to complete such a task.

The pilots of the 40th BAP (6th SAD, Vindava airfield) had an average flight time on a SB bomber of 170 hours. Flight time for squadron commanders: 300, 441, 400, 460, 353 hours. 10 crews in the 9th BAP and 6 crews in the 40th BAP were trained for night flights (although such a mode of combat use for a light front-line SB bomber could be considered a rare exotic). All the above figures refer to the end of March - beginning of April 1941. With the onset of the warm season, flight training became noticeably more active. So, in May 1941, in the 40th BAP, 196 training bombings, 196 air firing, 895 training flights with a total flying time of 871 hours were carried out. (40) In terms of one pilot (and

in the 40th BAP on the eve of the war there were 47 combat-ready crews), this gives 18.5 hours of flight time and 4.2 bombing per month. There is nothing special to rejoice here, in combat conditions, even at the rate of a very modest voltage of 1 sortie per day, the bombers had to fly (and even more so - bomb) more and more often. The Suvorov rule (“hard in learning - easy in battle”) was, unfortunately, forgotten. However, by the standards of the Soviet Air Force, such combat training could be considered quite acceptable (I recall that by order of the People's Commissar of Defense, a raid on one pilot of the Red Army Air Force was set at 160 hours per year). The 40th BAP also looked good against the background of the "southern neighbor" - in the best in terms of combat training air division of the Western OVO (13th BAD) in May 1941, one crew flew an average of 14 hours and completed 3 bombings.

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As expected, most (6 out of 8) bomber regiments of the Baltic OVO had experience of participating in real combat operations of the “winter” Soviet-Finnish war. The combat experience of the 50th BAP (4th SAD, Haapsalu airfield) was completely outstanding. During the "winter war" this regiment carried out 2321 sorties, and a real "star rain" fell on the personnel - ten (!) People were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, including the commander, commissar and three squadron commanders. (40) The 54th BAP (57th SAD, Vilnius airfield) after the Finnish war received the title of "Red Banner", 201 people (this is not a typo - 201) from the personnel of the regiment were awarded orders and medals. (42)

Early in the morning of June 22, 1941, the bomber units of the Air Force of the North-Western Front received an order to start hostilities. How "early" and at whose command - these simple questions are still difficult to give an accurate

and exhaustive answer. As is known, at the highest echelon of the military-political leadership of the country, up to the moment of the actual outbreak of the war, no decision was made to put the Cover Plan into effect. Instead, late in the evening of June 21, Stalin approved and sent to the troops signed by People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko and Chief of the General Staff Zhukov the infamous document that went down in history under the name "Directive No. 1". The one where the order *"not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications"* was combined with the requirement *"to be in full combat readiness to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans."* It was now up to the command of the districts / fronts to distinguish between a “provocation” and a “sudden strike”, moreover, in a situation of severe lack of time and with a very likely arrest

and execution in case of a mistake. On the other hand - and this is extremely important to note - even before June 21, the command of the districts received some instructions from Moscow; the same directives that have not been published to this day, in accordance with which fronts were deployed in "peacetime", front-line departments were deployed to field command posts, and in operational reports with numbers 1,

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did not lead." Most likely, the commanders of the fronts "as far as they are concerned" were also familiarized with the general strategic task, for the solution of which a huge army was deployed. So the demand “not to succumb to provocations” was by no means the only instruction received in the last pre-war days at the headquarters of the districts / fronts.

At the headquarters of the North-Western Front, Directive No. 1 was "solved" as follows: at 2.25, signed by the front commander, Colonel-General F.I. in Siauliai and Kaunas), in which, in particular, the following tasks were set:

“1... In case of provocative actions of the Germans, do not open fire. When flying over our territory, German aircraft should not be shown, and until the enemy aircraft begin hostilities, do not open fire. 2. In the event of a large enemy force going on

the offensive, defeat him ... 8. Put the means and forces of air defense on

combat readiness number one, preparing a complete blackout of cities and objects ... ”(46) If not in all, then in many formations of the Air Force of the front

corresponding instructions were received within the next hour. *“57 SAD at 3.25 22.6.41 announced a combat alert and by 4.00 was ready to carry out combat missions ...” (43)* This is a line from the Opersvodka of the headquarters of the 57th SAD dated 10.00 on June 22; it is possible that in other formations of the Air Force of the front, a combat alert was announced even earlier, but among the documents that I found, this record fixes chronologically the earliest moment of declaring a combat alert. Judging by Operational Report No. 1 of the headquarters of the 241st ShAP (the assault aviation regiment of the 7th SAD, which is being formed at the Mitava airfield), the regiment, consisting of 15 crews, by 4.00 was already in readiness No. 2. (44) Taking into account the time required to bring the air unit into such a state (ready to take off in 3-4 minutes after receiving the appropriate command), it can be assumed that the 241st ShAP has not been “peacefully sleeping” since at least 3.30 on June 22.

At 4.15 on June 22, the first (again, the first of those found by me, and not the very first of those that were in reality) appears

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order. On a piece of paper from a school notebook in a box in pencil, rather illegibly, it is written:

"Commanders of

regiments. 1. Have dispersed aircraft with the ability immediate takeoff on signal.

2. To be ready [inaudible] *to destroy enemy ground troops and enemy aircraft* [inaudible] *on our territory. Don't break the border. Be ready to destroy*

ground

enemy troops in the area [inaudible] - *Taurogen.*

Commander of the 7th SAD Colonel

Petrov. (45) In the "Journal of accounting orders of the 7th SAD" discovered by M. Timin, the first entry refers to the time of 4.40 on June 22. The district/front air force commander ordered the division commander to “destroy the enemy” (the previous part of the phrase has not been preserved). After 13 minutes, at 4.53, the commander of the 7th SAD already gives the order to the commanders of the bomber regiments of the division (9th BAP and 46th BAP): “ *Destroy the enemy grouping and aviation in the area of Tilzit, Ragnit, Gillen* (all points on the territory of Eastern Prussia, i.e. the restriction “do not violate the border” was lifted a few minutes after the first bombing strikes by German aircraft. - *M.S.). Departure immediately."* At the same time (at about 4.40), the commander of the Air Force of the front, Major General Ionov, ordered the commander of the 4th SAD to strike with the forces of three (!) Bomber regiments on the city and port of Memel. (40)

Documentary confirmation that in the early morning of June 22, 1941, the commanders of units and formations of the Baltic OVO Air Force received an order (permission) to open the “red packets” has not yet been found. On the other hand, elementary common sense suggests that an “immediate flight” with the task of bombing objects in the adjacent territory could be organized and carried out only according to the plans developed in advance, back in the pre-war period. Otherwise, impromptu in 20 - 30 minutes, such an operation is prepared to be

can not.

The intention (we note right away that it was practically not implemented) to bomb Memel is also quite remarkable, and even with the involvement of such significant forces (three bomber

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shelf). On the morning of June 22, the German fleet did not take any active actions in the zone of the Baltic OVO, did not land landings, and did not fire at coastal areas. The order to strike at the port of Memel could not have appeared as a hasty reaction to a really developing situation, and the formulation of such a task is explainable only within the framework of the hypothesis that the Air Force command of the Northwestern Front independently decided to act according to the Cover Plan, in which - along with the standard for of all PPs of the districts with tasks *("by successive strikes on established bases and military operations in the air to destroy enemy aircraft and gain air supremacy ... to disrupt and delay the concentration of troops by strikes on railway junctions and bridges") - it was directly written: "destroy the port of Memel* " . (12)

At 5 a.m. on June 22, 1941, the 5th squadron of the 9th BAP under the command of Captain M.A. Krivtsov (awarded the Order of the Red Banner after the Finnish war) took off and headed for Tilsit. Thus began the first, the very first strike of Soviet aviation on targets in Germany in that terrible four-year war. In distant Moscow, at that time, Stalin and his closest associates were just being awakened (judging by the "Visit Log", the meeting in Stalin's office began at 5.45).

Captain Krivtsov acted tactically very competently (which, by the way, can serve as another indirect confirmation that the raid was carried out in accordance with a carefully thought-out pre-war "preparation") - the squadron did not fly along the shortest straight line, but made a big detour in the direction of Suwalki, and left on the target from an unexpected side for the German anti-aircraft gunners; the suddenness of the strike was also facilitated by a rather large (by the standards of tactical front-line aviation) flight altitude - 7500 meters.

(40) And at the very moment when the nine SBs, accelerating in a gentle dive, entered the "combat course", new instructions flew from Moscow to the headquarters of the Northwestern Front. A stingy entry in the "Journal of Recording Orders of the 7th SAD" testifies to this episode of the war, which is by no means stingy with emotions: *"6.15. Brigade commander Krupin - commander of the 7th SAD. Do not violate state borders. Destroy enemy aircraft in your area. Planes that have taken off by radio should be landed at airfields.* Kombrig Krupin (Chief of Staff of the

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front) was only following the instructions of even higher authorities. In the report of the commander of the NWF to the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR dated 6.10 June 22, 1941, we read: *“Our air force is in the air. Until I received your order not to fly over the border, I received through General Safronov your order not to fly over the border without permission. He took measures to bomb the enemy without*

overflying the border ... " (47) According to the recollections of one of the participants in the first raid, Captain Krivtsov received a "stop order" on the radio at a time when the planes of his squadron were already on a "combat course" with open bomb bays! The squadron commander first closed the hatches, but after a few seconds he made the final decision and, together with his subordinates, brought down the bomb load on the Tilsit railway station. At 7.10 the squadron, without losing a single aircraft, returned to the Panevezys airfield. The first sortie for the other two squadrons of the 9th BAP was not so successful - during a bombing attack on a concentration of German troops in the Tilsit region, they were met by powerful fire from German anti-aircraft guns; three aircraft were shot down. (40) The war turned out to be very short for the crews of Lieutenant Voronin, Senior Lieutenant

Bogomolov and Captain Korotkov ... In the “Consolidated operational report No. 01” prepared on June 23 by the headquarters of the 9th BAP, the first strike of the regiment’s bombers is described as *follows :* according to other documents, 25 aircraft took part in the morning flight. - *M.S.) along the Tilsit railway station and the concentration of troops in the Tilsit area from H = 4000 meters. Dropped 132 FAB-100. Tilsit station is on fire. Over the target fired anti-aircraft artillery. 4 crews did not return. The reason for the non-return of aircra*

The base airfield of the 9th BAP was located near Panevezys, i.e. ten kilometers from the field command post of the North-Western Front and the Front Air Force headquarters. Perhaps this explains the fact that it was the 9th BAP that was the first to take to the air to strike at targets in East Prussia. It is equally important to note another significant circumstance - the 9th BAP acted so actively in a situation where its airfield became

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the object of one of the very first and most successful (for the enemy) German air raids. As always in such cases, the data

given in various documents do not coincide with each other and have a clear tendency to increase "from summary to summary". So, the above-mentioned Intelligence Report No. 03 of the NWF headquarters by 12.00 on June 22 reports that *"at 4 hours 55 minutes 5 aircraft bombarded the Panevezys airfield." (35)* M. Timin in his article (40), referring to the documents of the 9th BAP, writes that *“at 4.30 a dozen twin-engine Luftwaffe bombers attacked the regimental airfield; The bombing lasted about 15 minutes."* The commander of the 7th SAD, Colonel Solovyov, in a report (n / n, time not specified, not earlier than 12.00) to the chief of staff of the Air Force of the front reports: “The enemy *carried out strikes on the airfields of Siauliai, Gruzdzhiai, Panevezys; parts are dispersed. As a result of a raid on airfields, 2 people were killed, 11 were wounded. Losses of aircraft in air combat ... ” (49)* Nothing was said about the losses of aircraft on the ground.

However, in the following “Summary of the 7th SAD for 22.6.41” (also without a number and an indication of the exact time, probably compiled at the end of the day), the 9th BAP already lists 6 aircraft destroyed on the ground irretrievably, and 10 damaged ! (50) Finally, “Summary operations report No. 01” of the headquarters of the 9th BAP, compiled on the evening of June 23, describes the ground losses of the regiment as follows: “ *At the Panevezys airfield 22.6. 7 SBs burned down, 14 SBs were damaged, 5 of them were commissioned. 1 navigator and 1 technician were killed, 8 people were injured, incl. 2 technicians ... In total, 22 aircraft and 38 crews are in service.* (48) Such figures categorically disagree with simple arithmetic: after the loss of 4 (or even 5) aircraft in the air and 16 on the ground, at least 30 serviceable SBs should have remained in the regiment ...

For another bomber regiment of the 7th Air Division **(46th BAP),** the first day of the war was the beginning of a quick and crushing defeat. Approximately an hour (at 5.40) after receiving the order from the commander of the 7th SAD *(“destroy the enemy grouping and aircraft in the area of Tilsit, Ragnit, Gillen; take off immediately”),* three squadrons of the 46th BAP, one after another, took to the air. 10 minutes before (at 5.30) the commander of the 7th SAD gave the order to the commander

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fighter regiment of the division (10th IAP) *"with one nine to cover the departure of 46 BAP."* Considering that the enemy, awakened by that time by a bomb attack on Tilsit, had already completely "woken up", such an outfit of forces to cover three bomber squadrons was clearly insufficient, but in fact not a single (out of 34 serviceable) fighter of the 10th IAP flew out for escort . Further events are described in Operational Report No. 1 of the regiment headquarters as follows: *“I report that at 6.40 /*

6.45 on 22.6.41. The 2nd and 3rd squadrons of the 46th BAP carried out bombing in the amount of 18 aircraft. The 2nd AE destroyed the accumulation of troops in the area of Tilsit, Taurogen, H = 3600m. During the bombing in the 2nd AE, 5 SB aircraft with crews did not return. In total, bombs were dropped: 36 FAB-100 and 18 FAB-50. The 3rd AE destroyed the Gillen railway station (now Zhilino, 17 km south of Tilsit. - *MS) from the H-3500m, 5 crews did not return from the flight. Bombs dropped: 36 FAB-100 and 18 FAB-50.* (40)

Similarly (“10 SB with crews did not return”) the result of the first sortie is also reflected in the Combat Report (b / n) for June 22 of the commander of the 46th BAP. (51) In the evening "Summary of the 7th GARDEN for 22.6.41" in addition to 10 aircraft shot down by enemy fighters, 2 more shot down by anti-aircraft fire are added. (50) True, 2 of the 12 lost SBs were able to reach their airfield, where they made emergency landings with killed arrows and a wounded navigator of one of the crews. (40) Comparing the time of the sortie of the 46th BAP with the time and place of the air battle with Soviet bombers noted in the II / JG-53 reports, it can be assumed that the German fighters caught up with the once "high-speed" SB already over Soviet territory, in the Nemakshay area, Rossiens (that is, literally over one of the airfields of the very 10th IAP, which was ordered to provide cover!). (367) Due to the fact that the massacre took place over their territory, seven crew members of the downed bombers managed to escape and go to their own. (40) As

far as can be judged from the documents of June 41st, one, but very important victory of the 46th BAP simply went unnoticed. The gunner-radio operator of the SB bomber hit the Messerschmitt with a well-aimed burst, in the cockpit of which was the commander of the 11 / JG 53 group, an experienced Luftwaffe ace (he began to fight back in Spain)

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Captain Bretnutz. By June 22, 1941, he had 35 victories on his personal account, but the first day of the Eastern Campaign became fatal for him: Bretnutz was wounded, parachuted over Soviet territory, was captured, then was released by the advancing ground forces, taken to the hospital, where he died from his wounds. The crews of another,

5th, squadron of the 46th BAP were saved from defeat in the air by a "stop order", which arrived at the headquarters of the 7th SAD at 6.15 on June 22; the squadron turned around in the air and returned to its airfield in Gruzdziai. However, less than an hour passed, as most of the planes that landed safely were destroyed on the ground. The story of Lieutenant General V.P. Bulanov, who met the war as the navigator of the Ar-2 bomber in the 46th BAP, quite frankly describes this

episode: *“At 4.30 we were alarmed. - Like what? Do not say anything. At about 5 o'clock they give the first task: to bomb the Germans who-are forcing the Neman River in the Tilsit region. The first squadron takes off, the second takes off - nine aircraft each. We take off with the third squadron. The first nine bombed, the second bombed ... We were already approaching the Neman, and suddenly the team - to return ... We return with a full bomb load. We land* (a flagrant violation of the rules of flight operations, it is strictly forbidden to land with bombs, in such a case the standard bomb releaser has a mode of blank dropping of bombs "for non-explosion." - *M.S.)* they forgot about the bombs before breakfast. - *M.S.) - and then suddenly a German reconnaissance aircraft flies by, and Heinkel-111 bombers appear behind it. Also nine. The Germans began to bomb the aircraft parking areas, and when they were bombed, they passed at low level and began to fire machine guns along the edge of the forest. They made a call once, combed, the second ... The Germans bombed the target, dropped some of the bombs into the forest and left without loss. Finally, everything calmed down. We started to get ready for the airfield. As soon as they began to approach, our own bombs in the planes began to explode. We are back to tear! The losses in the equipment remaining at the airfield turned out to be*

significant ... ” (52) The special report of the 3rd Directorate (military counterintelligence) of the NCO No. 2/35552 dated June 28, 1941 gives

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events:

“The main losses [of the 7th air division] *relate to the 46th BAP and are explained by the disorganization and confusion on the part of the regiment commander, Major Senko, and the chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Kanunov, who caused the entire personnel to panic during the first enemy raid. On June 22, the 46th BAP lost 20 aircraft, of which 10 were destroyed during an enemy raid on the Siauliai airfield, and the rest were shot down while performing combat missions to bombard enemy troops in the Tilsit area and st. Gillain. Three nine aircraft of the 46th BAP were released to perform combat missions without escort of their fighters. The observation posts were not organized, the headquarters of the regiment had no connection with them and did not know about their existence ... " (53)*

Judging by the combat report of the commander of the 46th BAP for June 22, 1941, mentioned above, Gruzdziai airfield was indeed bombed at 9.30 by a group of 10 enemy bombers. The lack of notification, the lack of anti-aircraft countermeasures, as well as the bombs on board the aircraft ready to explode, led to the fact that *“9 SBs and 1 Ar-2 burned down, 9 SBs were damaged (requiring major repairs), 2 were killed and 5 people were injured.” (51)* The aircraft of the 46th BAP, damaged at the Gruzdziai airfield, never received a major (as well as any other) repair - in the afternoon, the regiment fled (yes, if desired, this can be called "relocation") and already to in the evening I ended up at the Rumbula airfield, i.e. on the right (northern) bank of the Daugava... (54)

Six other bomber regiments of the Air Force of the North-Western Front did not participate in the first morning strike - in an atmosphere of general confusion, their commanders either did not receive the appropriate command at all, or did not rush to carry it out, patiently waiting until the top leadership figured out their complex military and political "games ".

Meanwhile, the Kremlin finally realized that the war had begun. The result of this realization was the following, equally infamous Directive No. 2, sent to the troops at 7.15 on June 22, 1941. Here is its text, from the first to the last word:

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"On June 22, 1941, at 04:00 in the morning, German aviation, without any reason, raided our airfields and cities along the western border and bombarded them. At the same time, German troops opened artillery fire in different places and crossed our border.

In connection with the unheard-of impudence attack from Germany against the Soviet Union I ORDER:

1. Troops to attack enemy forces with all their strength and means and destroy them in areas where they have violated the Soviet border.

2.

Reconnaissance and combat aviation to establish the places of concentration of enemy aviation and the grouping of its ground forces.

Destroy aircraft at enemy airfields and bomb groupings of his ground forces with powerful strikes by bomber and attack aircraft. Air strikes should be carried out to the depth of German territory up to 100-150 km. Bomb Königsberg and Memel.

Do not make raids on the territory of Finland and Romania until special instructions. (55)

Neither in form nor in content Directive No. 2 does not comply with the statutory norms for drafting combat orders. There is an order, and in the army it must be followed. The text of the order should correspond not to the literary tastes of the author, but to Art. 90 of the Field Regulations PU-39 *("The first paragraph of the order gives a concise description of the actions and the general grouping of the enemy ... The second paragraph indicates the tasks of the neighbors and the borders with them. The third paragraph gives the formulation of the task of the*

formation and the decision of the commander giving the order ...") From the standpoint of these statutory requirements Directive No. 2 is nothing more than an emotional (if not worse, hysterical) cry. "Crash and destroy" is not the language of a battle order. Just as redundant are the arguments about the "unheard of impudence of the enemy." Instead, the subordinates of Tymoshenko and Zhukov were to receive specific answers to the questions: where is the enemy? What are his powers? Wha

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grouping, in what directions should it be “collapsed” on it? What are the milestones and by when? Returning

to the history of the military operations of the Air Force of the North-Western Front, we note that Directive No. 2 still limited the actions of the front's aviation *("air strikes to a depth of German territory up to 100 - 150 km"),* while according to the Cover Plan, the aviation of the Baltic OVO was supposed to to destroy the bridges across the Vistula in the section Danzig (now Gdansk), Bydgoszcz 300-350 km west of the border. Also noteworthy is the obsessive desire to “bomb down Memel”, which cannot be explained by reasonable operational considerations. To the credit of the NWF Air Force Command, it should be noted that its decisions

turned out to be much closer to reality. The main threat, of course, did not lurk at all in the port of Memel. On a narrow strip of land from Tilsit to Suwalki, two (4th and 3rd) tank groups of the Wehrmacht huddled together, a total of seven tank and six motorized divisions. On the morning of June 22, the compressed spring began to straighten rapidly, throwing forward long “steel threads” - columns of tanks, artillery tractors, motorcycles, armored personnel carriers, trucks and tankers stretching for tens of kilometers. There were so many German mechanized formations, and there were so few roads among the dense forests of Southern Lithuania, that it took the Wehrmacht two days to push all this colossus into Soviet territory, and when on the morning of June 24 the 7th Panzer Division (vanguard of the 3rd TGr) had already occupied Vilnius, the division groups closing the battle order (19th tank and 14th motorized) were just

crossing the border. For the aviation of that era, a column of mechanized troops was an ideal target. Bombs dropped from a "horizontal" bomber scatter in the form of an ellipse, strongly elongated along one of its axes, in the direction of the aircraft's velocity vector; the bomb release device made it possible, by setting the time interval at the so-called. "Dumping in a series", to further stretch the bomb fall strip. Thus, when attacking a mechanized convoy, the task of aiming was greatly simplified - it was necessary to ensure an accurate hit only along one coordinate (“to the left - to the right”), “further - closer” no longer mattered in a situation where the length of the target is measured in kilometers. And if the defeat of the tank was

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a very unlikely event (the FAB-50 pierced the armor of light tanks only with an explosion no further than 1-2 meters from the target, and even a special powerful fragmentation bomb (OFAB-100) required an accuracy of at least 10 meters from the tank), (56) then cars , gas tanks, (or motorcycles, lightly armored) tractors, which accounted for more than 90% of all moving objects of a tank division, were easily vulnerable from the air. At least, Soviet historiography traditionally explained the disappearance of the mechanized corps of the Red Army, which on the same days and hours, raising the same clouds of smoke and dust, moved towards the Germans along the roads of Belarus and Lithuania with “massive enemy air strikes” ... Communication between Moscow and

Riga worked quite steadily, which can be judged by the fact that already at 8.40 the “Riga headquarters of Colonel Rasskazov” sends the following instruction to the air regiments of the 7th SAD: “Bomber aviation is allowed to attack enemy infantry and aviation *on its territory to a depth of 100 km . During massive enemy air raids on our territory, raise bomber aircraft and follow in the tail to attack his airfields ... " (57)* strong blows of the Tilsit and Kalvarian enemy groupings. (58) “Tilsit grouping” is the 4th tank group of the Wehrmacht, developing an offensive in the direction of Tilsit, Taurogen (now Taurage), Siauliai; The “Kalvary grouping” is the 3rd tank group, whose divisions advanced along the Suwalki road, Lazdzee (now Lazdiai), Seree (now Seriai), Alytus.

Between 10 and 12 o'clock on June 22 (the exact time is not indicated in the document), Major General Ionov, commander of the NWF Air Force, signs Combat Order No. 01 / OP. The following tasks were set in the

order: *“... Third. The PribOVO Air Force during 22.6.41 destroy enemy ground units and aircraft in the areas of Memel, Tilsit, Shtallupenen, Insterburg.*

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a) 6 SAD (without 40 BAP) under the cover of 15 IAP and 31 IAP 8 SAD destroy [ground units and enemy aircraft at airfields] (words in square brackets crossed out, inscribed in black ink: *"tanks") in the area [Taurogen, Tilsit, Ragnit]* (the words in square brackets are crossed out, inscribed in black ink: *“Kalvaria, Lazdzee, Seree”). 40 BAPs to destroy enemy aircraft and groupings in the area of Taurogen, Tilsit, Ragnit. b) 57 SAD to destroy [ground units and enemy aircraft at airfields]* (words in square brackets crossed out, inscribed

in black ink: *“tanks”) in the area [Bazdenen, Pilkallen]* (words in square brackets crossed out, inscribed in black ink: *“Lazdzee, gray"). c) 15 IAP and 31 IAP cover the actions of 31 BAP in the area [Taurogen, Tilsit, Ragnit]* (the words in square brackets are crossed out, written in black ink: *“Lazdzee, Seree”). d) 4 SAD by 12.00 22.6.41*

relocate to airfields: 50th BAP - Riga, 65th BAP - Mitava, 35th BAP - Platon and be ready to act to destroy enemy ground troops and aircraft in the Taurogen, Tilsit, Ragnit area. e) the rest of the units (i.e. fighter and

assault regiments. -

M.S.) 7th and 8th SAD operate according to the plan of the army commanders.

f) meeting of 31 BAP with 31 IAP over the Kaunas point at an altitude of 4000 meters.

Fourth. Inflict the first blow: 6 SAD at 12.00, 7 SAD at 12.30 22.6. Fifth.

Tension: fighters and attack aircraft - three regiments of sorties, bombers - two regiments of sorties per day. Sixth. Night crews of bomber

regiments

prepare for night operations in the Königsberg area. Seventh. KP -

Panevezys. (61) The original text of

the order clearly shows the rapid change in the plans of the front air force command. If the original typewritten text (it is possible that it was prepared back in peacetime, as part of the development of the Cover Plan) involves a strike on airfields and enemy troops on the territory of East Prussia, then the amendment made to the order clearly changes the task - now the main efforts of the bomber

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aviation is supposed to be concentrated on the destruction of enemy motorized mechanized columns moving across Soviet territory. One can argue

about the extent to which such a turn in the formulation of tasks was justified. At the very least, the Luftwaffe command persistently put into practice the thesis that in the first hours and days of the campaign, enemy airfields should become the main object of attack - no matter how important and urgent the requests for air support from the ground forces were presented ("retreat from these *provisions should not be allowed even in the most urgent cases, because this can have negative consequences both for the ground forces and for the Luftwaffe")* In any case, Combat Order No. 01 indicates that the front command quickly and accurately identified the directions of the main enemy attacks and tried organize strong resistance.[4]

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1.3. "My CP is in the air"

The first (and most powerful) blow to the German mechanized columns was delivered by the 31st BAP (6th GARDEN,

Mitava airfield). *“Combat order No. 01 headquarters of the 31st BAP,*

10.30 22.6.41, Mitava 1. The enemy occupied the Kalvaria area and concentrated a large number of tanks. The

weather is clear.

2. 31 SBAPs bombard the concentrations of Kalvaria tanks in two groups. a) 1st group: 1-2-3

AE 12.45 to bombard concentrations of enemy tanks in the Kalvaria area, the group commander is me. b) 2nd group: 4th and 5th AE 12.45 to

bombard concentrations of tanks
the enemy in the Kalvaria area, the group commander, Captain Petrov.

3. Flight route: IPM - Sheduva - Kruki - Pilvishki - Target - Kaunas - Sheduva - KPM. 4. Combat charge FAB-100

and FAB-250. 5. Marching order of battle:

column of nines, collection of the Mitava region. 6. Subsequent readiness No. 2 by 15.45.

1. My CP in the air is the leader of the first group,

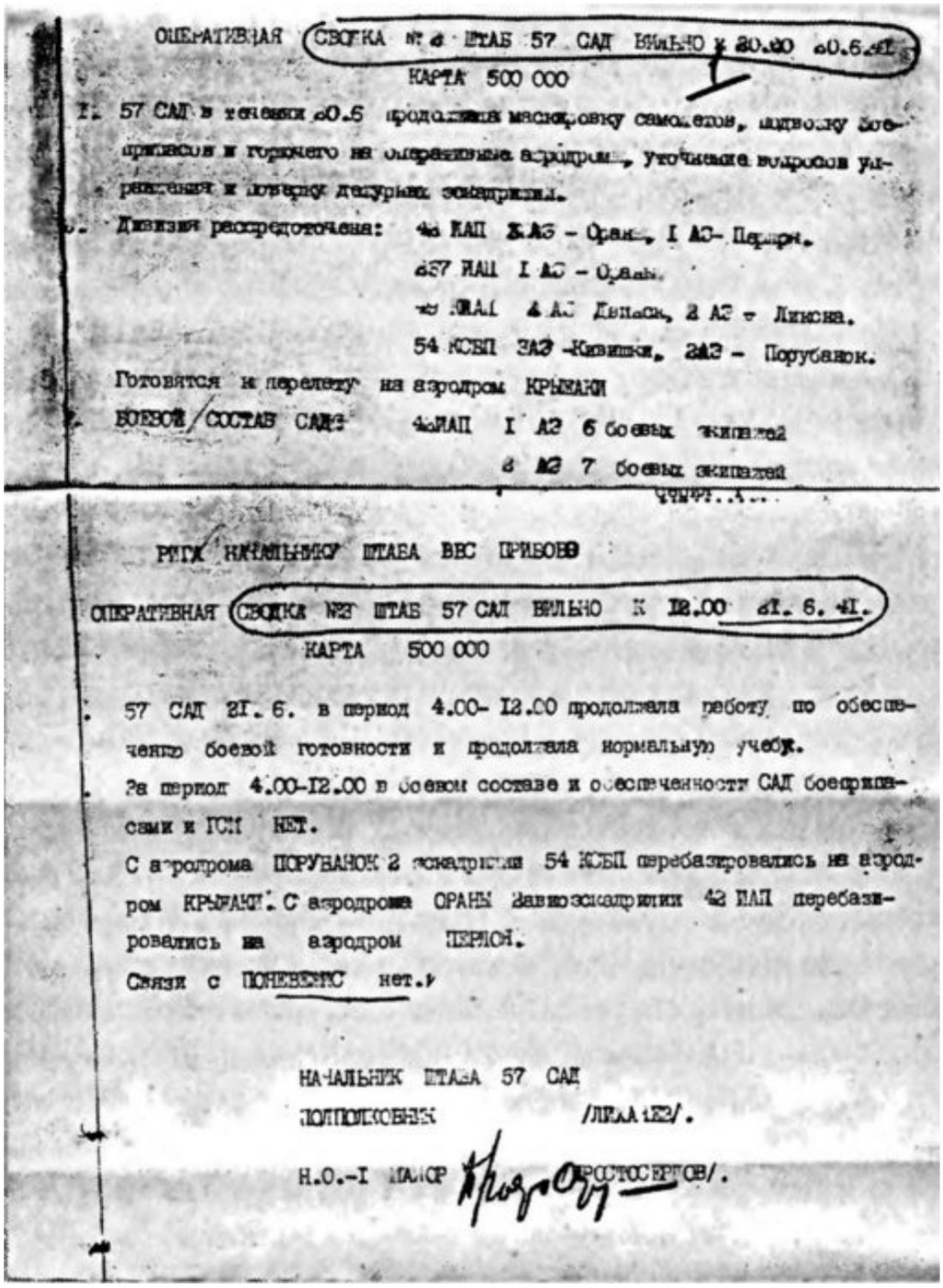
the deputy is Captain Vildyaskin. 8. Checkpoint mz Lipetu. Commander of the 31st BAP Lieutenant

Colonel Dobysh. (40)

On the first sortie, the regiment commander, a

participant in the war in China and Finland, led his subordinates himself - this alone speaks volumes. The decision to use heavy FAB-250s causes a slight shock. From the standpoint of today's knowledge, this is not the best option - as the experience of the war showed, the FAB-50 or even the AO-25 was quite enough to destroy unarmored vehicles, and the most effective way to use the SB light bomber in this case would be to load 12 (no longer allowed the design of the bomb bay and underwing holders) 50-kg bombs. However, F. I. Dobysh, apparently, decided to act for sure ...

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ОПЕРАТИВНАЯ СВОДКА № 6 ШТАБ 57 САД ВИЛЬНО К 20.00 20.6.41.
КАРТА 500 000

I. 57 САД в течении 20.6 продолжал маскировку самолетов, подвозку боеприпасов и горючего на оперативные аэродромы, уточнение вопросов управления и поверку дежурных экипажей.

2. Дивизия рассредоточена: 42 ИАП Б.АЗ - Орша, I АЭ - Первое.
457 ИАП I АЭ - Орша.
43 ИАП 4 АЭ Двинск, 2 АЭ - Лиозно.
54 КСБП ЗАЭ -Кизинки, 2АЭ - Порубанок.

Готовятся к перелету на аэродром КРЫЛАНЫ

3. БОЕВОЙ СОСТАВ САД: 42ИАП I АЭ 6 боевых экипажей
2 АЭ 7 боевых экипажей

РЕПИТ НАЧАЛЬНИКУ ШТАБА ВВС ПРИБОВУ

ОПЕРАТИВНАЯ СВОДКА №2 ШТАБ 57 САД ВИЛЬНО К 12.00 21. 6. 41.
КАРТА 500 000

1. 57 САД 21. 6. в период 4.00- 12.00 продолжала работу по обеспечению боевой готовности и продолжала нормальную учебу.

2. За период 4.00-12.00 в боевом составе и обеспеченности САД боеприпасами и ГСМ НЕТ.

3. С аэродрома ПОРУБАНОК 2 эскадрильи 54 КСБП перебазировались на аэродром КРЫЛАНЫ. С аэродрома ОРАНЫ 3авиаэскадрильи 42 ИАП перебазировались на аэродром ПЕРЕВОЗ.

4. Связи с ПОНЕВЕЖЕМ нет.

НАЧАЛЬНИК ШТАБА 57 САД
ПОЛКОВНИК /ЛЕЛЮХЕ/.
Н.О.-I ПАМОР /ПРОТОСЕРТОВ/.

Operational reports of the headquarters of the 57th SAD for June 20 and 21, 1941

At 11.10, the bombers of the 31st BAP (a total of 38 crews took part in this raid) took off and at 12.20 in the area south of Kalvaria from a height of 2 km (which, by the standards of the Soviet Air Force, can be described as uncommonly bold actions) brought down

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on the accumulation of enemy troops 18 FAB-250 and 174 FAB-100. (63) In the target area, the aircraft were fired upon by small-caliber anti-aircraft guns (the Germans tried as best they could to cover their mechanized columns with mobile anti-aircraft guns), but all the crews of the 31st BAP, led by their commander, returned safely to the Mitava airfield. (40)

A little later (at 11.40), two nine bombers of **the 40th BAP ,** the second bomber regiment of the 6th SAD, rose from the Vindava airfield . Before that, German bombers struck (more precisely, they tried to strike) a blow to the airfield of the regiment, but to no avail: *“At 10.00, seven Heinkel-111s bombed Vindava, the bombs were dropped away from the airfield on the seashore. No damage. Bombing height 7000 - 8000 meters.* (129) The object of the strike

of the pilots of the 40th BAP was the German troops on the highway Tilsit - Taurogen. Judging by the regiment's railways, the bombs were dropped from a height of 2 - 2.5 km, the crews recorded direct hits. In the target area, the bombers of the 40th BAP were also fired upon by German anti-aircraft guns, but to no avail - all aircraft returned to base. From an even lower height (1700 meters), the concentration of German troops in the Tilsit area was attacked by the “consolidated group of Captain Lavrentsov” (nine SB crews from the 40th BAP and the Courses of the commanders of the 6th SAD). Despite the fact that this group was met not only by anti-aircraft fire, but also attacked by fighters, there

were no losses, all 9 SBs returned to the Riga airfield. (40) In none of the available documents of the headquarters of the NWF Air Force, the 6th and 8th air divisions, I could find any mention that the fighters of the 15th and 31st regiments complied with the order and covered the departure of the bombers of the 6th th SAD (and this despite the fact that, judging by the reports of the commanders of these regiments, on June 22, the 31st IAP completed 120 sorties, and the 15th IAP - all 202). (64) In such a situation, the unusually successful (especially in comparison with the tragic episode of the hostilities of the 46th BAP, which irretrievably lost 10 out of 18 aircraft in one raid) the actions of the bombers of the 6th SAD can serve as another clear illustration of how ephemeral it was "absolute air supremacy", which was attributed to German aviation by later writers. In reality, ac

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The Luftwaffe did not even bother to provide reliable cover for the strategically important bridge across the river. Neman near Tilsit and the highway Tilsit - Taurogen, along which the main forces of the 4th TGr advanced.

As noted above, Combat Order No. 01 of the Commander of the Air Force of the Front set the task for the bomber units to carry out "two regiment sorties a day." On the whole, for Soviet aviation such a combat tension looks almost unrealistic, but on June 22, 1941, three regiments of the NWF Air Force tried to fulfill this order.

The 9th BAP was the first to complete the second sortie. After an early morning raid on Tilsit, the regiment moved from Panevezys to Skvarbay, while communication with the division headquarters (7th SAD) was disrupted; probably for this reason, the order to strike at the accumulation of enemy troops in the Tilsit-Taurogen region was received by the regiment with a great delay. At 1500, two nines of SB bombers flew out on a mission. Again, there was no fighter cover, but this time military success accompanied the pilots of the 9th BAP - the Luftwaffe fighters missed this raid as well. Unfortunately, the German anti-aircraft gunners (and the Tilsit-Taurogen area covered a total of four anti-aircraft divisions) were more persistent, as a result, two bombers were shot down (judging by the fact that five crew members of the downed SB managed to return to the regiment, the pilots were able to reach their punched fragments of machine shells to Soviet territory). In a brief report from the deputy commander of the 9th BAP, battalion commissar Dorofeev, it was noted that the task was completed successfully, for which he received gratitude from the commander of the NWF, Colonel General Kuznetsov. (40)

The command and flight crews of the 31st and 40th bomber regiments of the 6th SAD with extraordinary speed prepared for a second flight, and already at 16.30 the first planes of the 40th BAP broke away from the runway of the Piltene airfield. This time, both regiments of the 6th SAD were to attack German motorized mechanized columns in the area of Kalvaria - Mariampol - Alytus, and again without fighter cover! Alas, this bombing raid showed that you can't tempt fate twice. In the target area, the first wave (17 bombers of the 40th BAP) was attacked by a large formation of German fighters (presumably two squadrons took part in the battle

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"Messers" from the 54th Fighter Squadron). It was difficult to resist such an onslaught with light defensive weapons from the Security Council (one ShKAS each at the upper and lower firing points of the gunner-radio operator). The result of an unequal battle - 7 downed Soviet bombers, including the leader of the group, Captain Pankov (the plane made an emergency landing on its territory, the crew survived). (40)

Heavy losses were suffered in the second sortie and "the consolidated group of Captain Lavrentsov." 11 SBs started from the Riga airfield and, covering a distance of 300 km, bombed the concentration of German troops east of Kalvary. Enemy fighters shot down 4 bombers, while gunner-radio operator Sergeant Nikitin shot down one Me-109. It may very well be (the time and place coincide) that it was the plane of the JG-54 squadron commander, Major Trautloft ("Messerschmitt" made an emergency landing with the landing gear retracted, Trautloft himself miraculously

remained intact). The most powerful blow to the enemy this time was delivered by the 31st BAP. Lieutenant Colonel Dobysh again personally led a group of 37 SBs of his regiment into battle. At 17.55 northeast of Kalvariya, 17 FAB-250s and 120 FAB-100s were dropped onto enemy tank columns from a height of 2000 meters. By this time, German fighters were already tightly covering the combat formations of the 3rd TGr, and in the ensuing air battle, 3 bombers of the 31st BAP were shot down; the air gunners claimed 4 Messerschmitgs shot down, but this information is not confirmed by the reports of the German fighter sq

The airfields of the 4th SAD were located furthest from the area of the outbreak of hostilities, and although, theoretically speaking, the SB bomber could well cover a distance of 500 km (from the Haapsalu, Vyhma, Tartu line to Tilsit) to the target and back, the commander of the NWF Air Force accepted completely a prudent decision, first of all, to relocate the three bomber regiments of the 4th SAD to the airfields of Riga, Mitava, Platon (see above Combat Order No. 01 / OP).

Judging by Opersvodka No. 03 / OP of the "Panevÿžys headquarters of the brigade commander Krupin", by 19.00 on June 22, the order of the front air force commander was carried out as follows: the 35th BAP in full combat-ready crews flew to the airfield in Platon, the 5

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("regiment of ten Heroes") part of the forces (28 SB and 5 Pe-2) moved to the Mitava airfield, the 63rd BAP simply remained in Estonia. (65) Although Opersvodka No. 03 / OP, without giving any details, reports that the 35th and 50th regiments *"made one sortie to destroy tanks in the area of Kalvaria, Lozdzee",* the documents of the division and regiments do not confirm the fact participation of the 35th BAP in the fighting on June 22. (40) In

fact, of the entire composition of the 4th SAD on the first day of the war, only the 50th BAP bombed the enemy. Before that, the regiment flew from Haapsalu to Mitava, i.e. to the base airfield of the extremely active 31st BAP, and, apparently, the pace and pressure of Lieutenant Colonel Dobysh were transferred to the commander of the 50th BAP.

In the time interval from 18.40 to 19.00, three groups (9 + 9 + 6) of SB aircraft (the newest Pe-2s did not participate in the first sortie) sequentially, from a height of 3000 - 3400 meters, the regiment bombed the concentration of German troops in the Taurogen area. In total, 144 FAB-100s and 24 ZAB-50 "lighters" were dropped on the enemy's motorized mechanized columns (the attentive reader may notice that the bombers of the What 50th BAP, in addition to the standard load - six bombs in the central internal bomb bay - also took the seventh, case for June 41, almost unique).

According to the reports of the crews, in the target area, the bombers were fired upon by anti-aircraft guns and repeatedly attacked by enemy fighters (there was no cover by their fighters in this case either) with a total number of up to 14 "Messers" (this figure is most likely overestimated). The experience gained by the crews of the regiment in the "winter war", as well as luck, ensured very low losses: one SB made an emergency landing in the Siauliai area, the rest of the aircraft returned safely to the Mitava airfield, while the air gunners claimed one downed enemy fighter (this loss was German documents not confirmed). (40)

Closest to the breakthrough zone of the 3rd TGR of the Wehrmacht were the airfields based on the 57th SAD. From Vilnius to Kalvaria no more than half an hour of flight at the cruising speed of an SB bomber; even closer (Orany, Perloya) were the airfields of the 42nd and 237th fighter regiments, on which at least 80 biplanes accumulated

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I-153 and I-15 bis, which could quite effectively attack columns of German vehicles, using both their powerful small arms (110 bullets per second threw out 4 ShKAS "seagulls"), and (time
And unique horizontal steady turn from maneuverability
10 to 13 seconds). The actions of the fighter
regiments of the Air Force of the North-Western Front will be discussed in the next section; As for the only bomber regiment of the 57th Air Division **(54th BAP),** the history of its combat operations turned out to be very short and sad.

First of all, it should be noted that by the time the war began, the regiment was without the most experienced crews, including squadron commanders! Strictly speaking, this alone can complete the discussion of the reasons for the rapid defeat of the 54th BAP. "Without a master, even a house is an orphan." Despite the whole hail of orders and directives to increase combat readiness that hit the Baltic OVO on June 18 - 21, 12 crews left the unit for retraining on the new Pe-2 bomber, others on the eve of June 22 overtook 13 SB from the regiment to the district flight school. True, the main "master" was available in the regiment - the regiment commander, Major Skibo, but this did not help to rectify the situation. In the report of the division commander (“Final information about the combat work of the units of the 57th SAD from 22.6 to 30.7.41”), the work of the regiment commander is characterized as follows: “The 54th Red Banner BAP worked unsatisfactorily, the regiment command : *Major Skibo, his deputy for political units, the battalion commissar Ustimenko and the chief of staff, lieutenant colonel Pisakov, failed to organize a clear management of the squadrons, did not achieve proper order at the airfields, did not personally visit the aircraft* (interesting wording! - *M.S.) ... Restoration and repair of materiel went slowly and under great pressure from the division command , when relocating, they forgot to take the necessary property in a timely manner - bomb rack locks, cameras, etc.* (as will be shown below, not only bomb racks, but also bombers were “forgotten” in the regiment when relocating. - *M.S.). There were sentiments in the regiment that it was dangerous to fly on an SB plane, because. it is easily overtaken by enemy fighters and strikes FOR. Command*

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the regiment did not wage a decisive struggle against these moods, and sometimes it itself showed

confusion ... ” (66) The commander of the 54th BAP was given, as expected, a harsher assessment: *“The commander of the 54th BAP, Major Skiba, leads combat sorties poorly, does not happen at airfields, gives orders from the dugout, without any*

data: “Go bomb - you will find the target themselves." To the remark that without data on the enemy, you can also bomb your own, Skiba replied: “I don’t know anything” ... Skiba himself did not fly out on a combat mission and handed over the plane attached to it to another pilot, his assistant Major Leontiev did the same. Before relocating from one airfield to another, Skiba, having the opportunity to take out valuable military equipment, abandoned or destroyed it ... " (53) Judging by the Opervodka No. 1 of the headquarters of the 57th SAD, compiled by 10.00, on the morning of June 22, the regiment did not lose from enemy

air strikes not a single combat aircraft! The timely dispersal of the regiment's units at the airfields of Kivishki and Kryzhaki (now Krizhokai, 30 km east of Vilnius) had an effect; at the Porubanok airfield (Vilnius) explored by the Germans in advance, only faulty vehicles left there were damaged. As in most other bomber regiments of the NWF Air Force, the early morning order to strike targets in East Prussia was ignored (or not received at all) in the 54th BAP. The fighting of the regiment began 6 hours after the start of the war. Operational report No. 1 of the headquarters of the 57th SAD reports: *“54 BAP at 10.20, consisting of 10 aircraft, went into the waiting area, subsequently having the task of escorting the enemy in the tail to bombard him when landing on airfields. Three squadrons of 19 aircraft are on alert at operational airfields." (67)*

The task assigned to the group of bombers of the 54th BAP, as we see, literally repeats the instructions given at 8.40 by the “Riga headquarters of Colonel Rasskazov” (“during *massive enemy air raids on our territory, raise bomber aircraft and*

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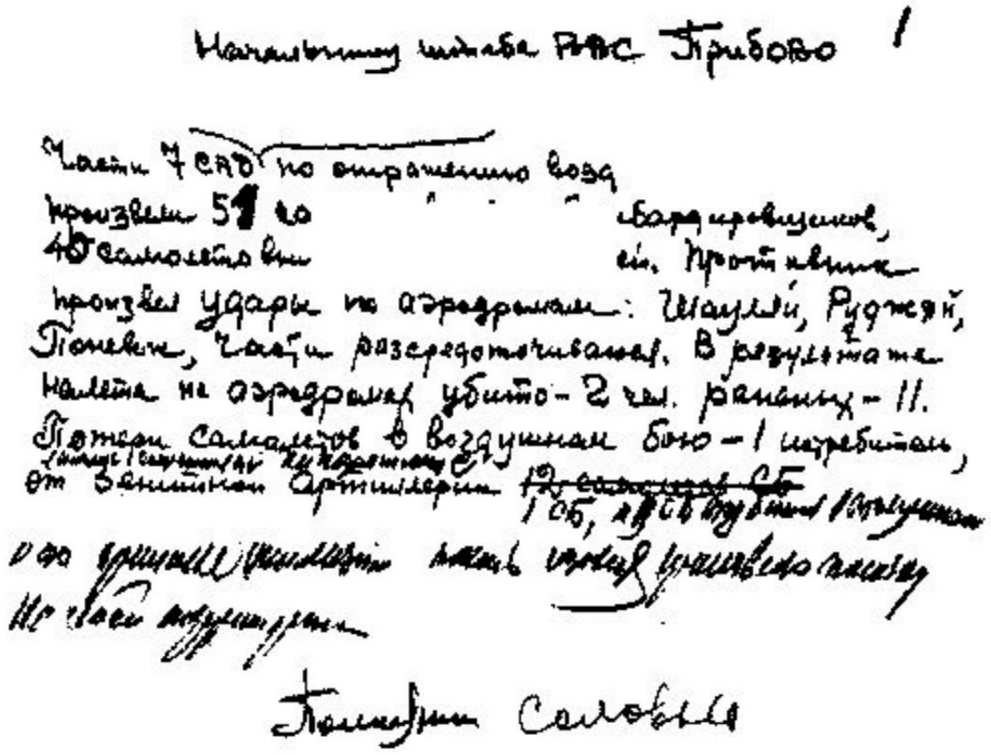
follow in the tail to attack its airfields"). Further events are not entirely clear. As M. Timin writes, *“a dozen SBs flew without cover to bombard the Gumbinen airfield ... German fighters attacked our group several times; as a result, the 5th squadron of the 54th SBAP lost three SB along with the crews.* (40) Unfortunately, this version is not confirmed by other documents; more plausible - and consistent with the original task assigned to the bomber group of the 54th BAP - seems to me the description of events given in the memorandum of the head of the 3rd department of the NWF mentioned above:

“The squadron, armed with Ar-2 aircraft and four SB aircraft, was waiting for an order (or the appearance of German aircraft, which it was supposed to “follow in the tail.” - *M.S.) in the air for 1.5 hours, resulting in a combat mission I couldn’t do it, because it can only be in flight for 3-4 hours. The Ar-2 planes were forced to land on their airfield with bombs, and the SB flight, which flew out on a combat mission after 1.5 hours of being in the air, completely died.* Be that as it may, the loss of three aircraft of the 54th BAP

in the first sortie is beyond doubt. At 11.40 another group of 8 bombers of the 54th BAP flew out - again without fighter cover - to strike at the airfields of East Prussia. The details of this flight are unknown. (40)

Combat report No. 357 (so in the document) of the headquarters of the 57th SAD dated 24.00 on June 23 describes the losses of the 54th BAP during the two days of the war as follows: “2 aircraft were shot down *in an air battle, the crew was alive, jumped out by parachute; 3 crews are missing." (68)* Total - 5 aircraft were lost in the air in two days. However, a day before that, Opersvodka No. 03 / OP of the “Panevezh front air force headquarters” reported that by 19.00 on June 22 in parts of the 57th SAD “10 SBs were shot down and *damaged in air battles”,* while the 54th BAP allegedly continues to be based at the Kivishki airfield. (69) On the other hand, released 2 hours earlier (by 17.00) Opersvodka No. 1 / OP of the "Riga headquarters", without mentioning the hostilities of the 54th BAP, already names two airfields as the base of the regiment: Vilnius (this name is the compiler reports could designate all three airfields of the Vilnius air hub) and Liksna. (70)

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June 22, 1941 The first combat report of the chief of staff of the 7th SAD

Liksna is already beyond the Daugava, 200 km north of Vilnius. By the evening of June 23, the 54th BAP was in full strength at this airfield, however, the “full strength” was reduced from 55 to 27 bombers (21 SB and 6 Ar-2). According to the Combat Report with the amazing number 357, 23 aircraft (17 SB and 6 Ar-2) *were "destroyed by the enemy at the airfield."* Where and when this happened is not an easy question. On the morning of June 22, as noted above, not a single aircraft of the 54th BAP was lost on the ground. In the report compiled much later (October 10, 1941) “Results of the combat work of the 57th SAD from 22.6 to 23.9.41” all the airfields where parts of the division were based are listed, and the number of enemy air raids on each of them is indicated (there were 73 in total); the airfields of Kivishki and Kryzhaki are not even mentioned in this list. (150) It remains to be assumed that 23 bombers were lost on the ground with minimal participation of the enemy in this ... Later, the losses of this regiment turned out to be

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record high - by the time it was withdrawn for reorganization (July 9-10), only one SB remained in service in the 54th BAP. (167)

Let us now sum up the first, most simple (i.e., arithmetic) results of the combat operations of the bomber regiments of the NWF Air Force on the first day of the war (see Table 2).

table 2

		5—9 ч.	10—14 ч.	14—19 ч.	Всего	Вес бомб, кг
4-я САД	35-й БАП	—	—	—	—	
	63-й БАП	—	—	—	—	
	50-й БАП			24 с/в, 1+	24 с/в, 1+	15.600
6-я САД	31-й БАП		38 с/в, 0+	37 с/в, 3+	75 с/в, 3+	38.150
	40-й БАП		27 с/в, 0+	28 с/в, 11+	55 с/в, 11+	?+?
7-я САД	9-й БАП	25 с/в, 3+		18 с/в, 2+	43 с/в, 5+	13.200 + ?
	46-й БАП	18 с/в, 12+			18 с/в, 12+	9.000
57-я САД	54-й БАП		12 (?) с/в, 5+		12 (?) с/в, 5+	?
Всего		43 с/в, 15+	77 с/в, 5+	107 с/в, 17+	227 с/в, 37+	более 115000

Notes: - the

first digit is the number of sorties, the second with a sign (+)

- the number of aircraft shot down or seriously damaged;

- the actions of the "combined group of captain Lavrentsov" are taken into account in the line of the 40th BAP.

227 sorties, more than 115 tons of bombs in one day. The absolute record of June 41st for Soviet front-line aviation (bombers of the "left neighbor" - the Air Force of the Western Front - completed no more than 200 sorties on June 22, bomber aircraft

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On the first day of the war, the Southwestern Front completed only 34 sorties; in the Air Force of the Southern Front, the peak level of combat tension was reached on June 26, when the bombers completed 151 sorties and dropped 60 tons of bombs). Extrapolating from the known data on the bomb load in 142 sorties (out of a total of 227), it can be assumed that in total more than a thousand 100-kg bombs were dropped on the enemy. But that's not all. On the first day of the war, long-range aviation (3rd DBAK) and parts of the 12th BAD of the Air Force of the Western Front worked in the Suwalki, Kalvaria area on the first day of the war. According to the calculations of M. Timin, a total of 352 s / in Soviet bombers were carried out in the area of \u200b\u200bthe advance of the

4th and 3rd tank groups of the Wehrmacht (Tilsit, Taurogen, Suwalki, Alytus). (40) More than one and a half thousand high-explosive bombs fell on the mechanized columns of the 4th and 3rd tank groups, i.e. on a huge accumulation of captured French trucks, Belgian buses, Dutch grain vans, German motorcycles, flaring from the very first fragment of gas tanks ... Yes, there were tanks in these columns - almost all (1272 out of 1544, to be exact) are light, weighing up to 10 tons (Pz-I, Pz-II, Pz-35 (t), Pz-38 (t). From a close explosion of a 250-kg high-explosive bomb, such light-tank small fry could fall apart at the welds ... Where are the memoirs of the commanders of German tank formations in which they explain the defeat of the troops entrusted to them by the fact that “enemy aviation destroyed all the rear of the regiments and the tankers left without fuel and ammunition were forced to disperse through the forests”? , the lack of proper fighter cover allowed enemy aircraft to defeat mechanized formations even at the stage of their advancement to the initial areas for battle "? actions of Soviet aviation. Literally not a single

word. And this despite the fact that a whole chapter (“Tank Raid”) is devoted to the throw from the border to Dvinsk in his memoirs. The first mention of the raids of Soviet bombers in Manstein's memoirs appears only in the description of the hostilities on June 30, after the crossing of the Daugava.

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In the memoirs of the commander of the 3rd tank group, G. Goth, there are a few words on the issue under discussion. Here they are, every one of them: *“There were no actions of tanks and aircraft. Air reconnaissance, carried out in clear weather, did not detect any enemy movements east of the Neman.* This is how Goth describes the events of the first day of the war. Then, *“after the tremendous success achieved on the first day of the offensive, the events of the second day fell short of expectations; the reason is not the actions of the enemy and not the mistakes of our troops and command, but the difficulties associated with the conditions of the terrain ... ”* Not a word was said about the crushing blows of enemy aircraft. True, in an indirect form, an assessment of the actions of the Soviet Air Force appears after a few pages: *“On the evening of the second day of the offensive ... the group commander ordered the columns of vehicles of the 8th Air Corps to be stopped and removed from the road intended for the movement of tanks ... If the enemy had strong aircraft, then, Perhaps a different decision should have been made.* (71) For the sake of completeness, the “scale factor” should be further clarified. On the afternoon of June 22, in the Alytus area, the 20th and 7th German Panzer Divisions entered into battle with scattered units of the Soviet 5th Panzer Division. At the same time, 11 tanks were lost, including four so-called. "heavy" (as the Wehrmacht designated the medium tank Pz-IV). This

episode, in a telegram from the headquarters of the 3rd TGr to the command of Army Group Center, was described as *"the largest tank battle during the period of this war." (72)* If the loss of 11 tanks caused such a violent reaction, then it is unlikely that the destruction of at least a few dozen combat vehicles from Soviet air strikes would have gone unnoticed ...) commanders of the Wehrmacht? I do not have a satisfactory answer to this question. It will hardly be a consolation to state that the traditional Soviet historiography refused to see the question itself. As some, private, by no means exhaustive explanations of the problem, we can note the following three

moment.

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Firstly, a particularly large effect was not worth the wait. Only the Soviet "historians" managed to defeat a tank division with air strikes - and then only in relation to the events of the summer of 1941, and only on the Soviet side of the front. The actual effectiveness of aviation weapons of that era was very low, aimed bombing at a point target from a "horizontal" bomber was practically impossible, hitting the target could only be accidental. All this could be compensated only by a huge number of sorties and dropped bombs. To inflict significant losses on two tank groups of the Wehrmacht (and this is about 15-20 thousand units of various equipment - from a motorcycle to a tank inclusive), the number of sorties by NWF air force bombers would have to be increased by at least two orders of magnitude!

Secondly, it is far from a fact that it was precisely the columns of equipment of the Wehrmacht tank divisions that became the objects of the bombing strikes; in particular, it is not entirely clear what exactly the planes of the NWF Air Force bombed in the area of Kalvaria in the afternoon of June 22 - by that time German tankers had already occupied

Alytus and were transported to the eastern bank of the Neman. Thirdly, bombing from medium heights (in most cases more than 2 - 3 km) was initially doomed to the fact that most of the bombs dropped would fall in an open field; the very, very "sparing" mode of pre-war combat training (3 - 4 training bombing per month per crew) also did not contribute to the high efficiency of operations. So it was possible to bomb Vyborg and Helsinki - but not the German motorized corps rapidly advancing to the east.

In conclusion of this paragraph, it remains only to recall that the very concepts of “big”, “small” are relative. It depends on what you compare it to. The number of sorties carried out on June 22, 1941 by the bombers of the Air Force of the North-Western Front should be recognized as large - in comparison with how the aviation of other fronts operated. Very large - in comparison with the later myth about "the aircraft of the border districts destroyed at dawn on June 22." Quite comparable - in comparison with the activity of enemy bomber aircraft.

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Everything changes if we take the potential capabilities of the grouping and the pre-war plans for its use as a starting point. Returning to Tables 1 and 2, we see that only in one of the eight bomber regiments (the 31st BAP of Lieutenant Colonel Dobysh) the number of sorties significantly (1.5 times) exceeded the number of serviceable aircraft. In general, the number of sorties throughout the front Air Force grouping turned out to be 1.5 times less than the number of combat-ready bombers - and this was on June 22, during 18 hours of daylight, in a situation where no more than 40-50 minutes of flight time separated the base airfields from German tank columns. time. Four regiments either did not participate at all in the hostilities of the first day of the war, or limited themselves to a minimal contribution to the solution of the common task. However, there is one more starting point, in comparison with which on June 22 the bomber aircraft of the North-Western Front acted superbly - these are all subsequent days of June 41st.

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1.4. On anxiously awake airfields

On the first day of the war, the bomber aviation of the NWF Air Force lost 37 aircraft in the air (shot down or made an emergency landing), which amounted to 16% of the number of sorties, or 11% of the initial number of serviceable bombers. The casualty rate is high, but by no means record-breaking for the air battles of World War II. Most likely, the losses could have been much less if the actions of the bombers had been provided with reliable fighter cover (at least 25 of the 37 lost SBs and Ar-2s were shot down by enemy fighters). Where was and what was the very numerous (at least 530 serviceable fighters,

i.e., an average of 1.5 fighters per 1 bomber) fighter aviation of the North-Western Front doing that day? The version that "the fighters were involved in fierce air battles over the airfields and therefore could not cover the actions of their bombers" will have to be discarded immediately - on June 22, 1941, the 1st Air Fleet of the Luftwaffe suffered the smallest (in comparison with other sectors Eastern Front) losses, in total 1 (one) fighter and 2 (two) bombers were irretrievably lost. Even taking into account the fact that 2 more fighters and 3 bombers of the 1st V.f. were damaged (damage less than 60% according to the German accounting system) and at least two Me-109s from Group III / JG-53 (2nd Air Fleet) were shot down in air battles over Lithuania, talking about "fierce air battles" with the participation of five hundred red star fighters is not necessary ...

8th GARDEN

The main striking force of the fighter aviation of the Northwestern Front was to be the 8th SAD. This division, although it was called "mixed", consisted of four fighter regiments ("old" personnel 15th IAP and 31st IAP, new emerging 236th and 240th) and one assault aviation regiment (61st ShAP) , in full

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standard norm armed with I-153 fighters (moreover, the latest factory series). The 15th IAP (one of the oldest in the USSR Air Force) in full force participated in the "winter war" against Finland, many pilots of the regiment had combat experience of the war in Spain and China; The 15th and 31st regiments were among the very first (as early as January 1941) to begin re-equipping with new MiGs [5] . Even without taking into account the two regiments being formed, without taking into account the many obsolete I-15s that cluttered the airfields of the 8th SAD, the division was armed with 100 MiGs, 76 Gulls and 25 Donkeys (and this, according to the most minimal estimates, many documents and studies give large numbers). There was something to fight on, and there was someone to fight - there were from 130 to 160 pilots in the division (according to reports and reports from the headquarters of the regiments, the division and the air force of the front).

The division was deployed in the center of the battle formation of the Air Force of the front (in the Kaunas, Karmelava, Keidany zone), at an approximately equal distance from the two main points of application of the efforts of the NWF bomber aviation - the Tilsit and Suwalki regions, and this distance did not exceed 150 km, which theoretically allowed any fighter accompany the bombers throughout the route to the target. In practice, the corresponding orders were received by the 15th IAP and the 31st IAP no later than 11 am on June 22. However, nothing stipulated by the orders, and indeed by all pre-war instructions, did not happen, and the bombers of the North-Western Front were left without cover.

I will immediately note that in simple ways - to take the documents of the relevant headquarters and read - it is not possible to find out the real reasons and circumstances for the defeat of the

8th SAD. The operational report of the headquarters of the 8th SAD with the number "one" appears only at 10 pm ... June 25! (73) The order of the commander of the 8th AD with number 01 is dated June 26 (twenty-sixth) and has a very eloquent title: “ *On measures to collect, restore and put together parts of the 8 AD - bringing them into a combat-ready state.”* As one of these "measures", Colonel Gushchin demands *"the most severe fight against unverified rumors that lead to panic, up to the use of weapons." (74)*

For the sake of truth, it should be noted that there is also a combat order (b / n) of the commander of the 8th SAD, signed at 23.30 on June 25. (75) If

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believe the document, the headquarters of the 8th SAD was by that time at the Platon airfield (165 km north of the place of pre-war deployment in Kaunas). The first of the available (w / n, but with Ref. No. 01) operational reports of the headquarters of the 31st IAP was compiled at 17.00 on June 26, and by this moment the regiment had already relocated to the Riga airfield. (76) I could not find combat documents for June 22, 23, 24.

The information vacuum is inevitably filled, filled with conjectures, and conjectures obediently reproduce the usual cliches of Soviet agitprop: “Everything was unreliable, faulty and broken, and history gave us little time.” So, back in 1994, Igor Gulyas published a long article entitled "The Victories of Soviet Pilots on the First Day of the War." (77) The article was a very detailed and solid compilation of journal articles and memoirs from the Soviet era and at that time could be considered one of the best of its kind; in subsequent years, the work of I. Gulyas was mercilessly quoted and rewritten, not always with quotation marks and an indication of the author. Regarding the combat operations of the 31st IAP, the following was said there: *“The 31st IAP was commanded by Putivko, the regiment had 37 MiGs, but 24 of them turned out to be out of order that morning. Obviously, this was the reason that the regiment commander alone fought against 6-7 enemy aircraft.*

The only thing that indisputably corresponds to reality here is the name of the regiment commander. The 31st IAP was indeed commanded by Major P. I. Putivko (veteran of air battles in Spain, awarded two Orders of the Red Banner). The already strange arithmetic, within which 37 - 24 = 1, is worthy of surprise (I drew the attention of readers to this paradox even in the very first edition of Aerodromes). (78) Gulyas himself, after the above phrase, gives a link to the source - this is the well-known publication of the "Military History Journal" "The First Days of the War in Documents" (1989), where, among other documents, the report of the Head of the Political Propaganda Department of the NWF Brigadier Commissar was published Ryabchiy.

The report is dated June 23 (although the text contains the words *“parts of the Air Force of the front fought for two days of the war”* and the statement that *“during the relocation, many aircraft were simply left at airfields or destroyed by their own flight technical*

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composition"; most likely, the real date of compilation was later) and indicates that Comrade Ryabchiy was poorly oriented in the situation. Thus, he reports that *“an*

instructor of the Political Propaganda Department has been sent to Vilna to assist civil organizations in liquidating bandit groups”; I would like to hope that this order was not brought to the attention of the executor, because on the morning of June 24, the party instructor would have found in Vilnius the complete absence of “civilian organizations” and a crowd of citizens greeting the 7th German Panzer Division with flowers. It is not entirely clear who told the brigade commissar that *"there is an acute lack of oxygen for high-altitude flights"* - German aircraft bombed and fired at columns of retreating Soviet troops with impunity from a low-altitude flight, and the lack of "oxygen for high-altitude flights" was the latest reason that prevented them from resisting. However, something else is more important for our investigation:

there are no stories about “24 faulty “flashes” out of 37” in the report of Comrade Ryabchiy. The following is literally said there: *“Our pilots fearlessly engage in battle with the enemy. The pilot of the 61st air regiment* (probably, we are talking about the 61st ShAP of the 8th GARDEN. - *M.S.) Andreychenko, the commander of the 31st air regiment Putivko single-handedly engaged in battle with 6-7 enemy aircraft.* (79)

Even a simple question about the number of “migs” in the 31st IAP as of the morning of June 22 will forever remain an unresolved mystery of history. By June 1, 1941, there were 54 of them, and only 7 were considered defective . *MiG",* as well as *"on the eve of the war, units of 31 IAP dispersed: only 3 AE remained in Kaunas (13 MiG-3 and 18 I-16), and three others (39 MiG-1 / MiG-3 and 2 I-16) were relocated to Karmelava"),* which in total gives 52 "flash". (80) The report “On the combat work of the 31st IAP for the period from 22 to 29.6.41” (81) states that by June 29 “37 MiG *aircraft were destroyed by the enemy during bombardment and shelling on the ground”,* and three more “ moment "(one is faulty) remained in service; in total it already gives

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40, and it is possible that in addition to 37 destroyed on the ground, several fighters were still lost in the air.

Of the many conflicting documents, special attention should be paid to the information on the number of sorties in the 31st IAP from June 22 to June 29, preserved in the archives “Operational reports of the headquarters of the 8th SAD”, personally signed by Major Putivko (as well as the chief of staff of the regiment, Captain Sergeev). (82) The sequence of numbers is very expressive: 120, 8, 15, 12, 23, 8, 12, 8. As you can see, Major Putivko confirms with his signature that on June 22 he fought not at all alone and the air regiment entrusted to him completed 120 sorties , i.e. about 2 - 3 sorties per serviceable aircraft - an indicator that is very worthy by any measure. But after that, something bad happened to the regiment, and the very next day (June 23) the number of sorties is reduced by exactly 15 times! Now let's look at this figure (120 sorties of the

31st IAP) from a different angle. Patrolling at cruising speed, the I-16 or MiG-3 fighter could be in the air for 1-1.5 hours (and this is at a minimum and without any external tanks), but even if we count much more modestly - 45 minutes per flight, - the total the flight was supposed to be about 90 hours. In other words, from 4 am to 10 pm, at least 5 fighters of the 31st IAP should have been in the air at the same time, and since they did not fulfill the orders to escort their bombers, it remains to be assumed that the regiment provided its own airfields with continuous air cover .

The numbers are staggering, but the 15th IAP is even more interesting. According to the report "Results of the combat work of the 15th IAP as of 27.6.41", signed by the regiment commander Major Bobrik and the chief of staff Major Lovkov, on the first day of the war, the fighters of the 15th IAP completed 202 (two hundred and two) sorties! As was shown in the previous paragraph, all the bombers of the entire aviation of the front carried out 227 sorties; it turns out that the 15th IAP alone could provide their cover almost in a ratio of 1 to 1. It could, but did not provide.

Judging by the report of the regiment commander, the 15th IAP actively fought against enemy bombers, on June 22 they were declared shot down

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bomber "Junkers-88", five "scouts", and these scouts were identified as "Heinkel-111" (aircraft of this type were not in the bomber groups of the 1st Luftwaffe Air Fleet, nor in the air units of the 2nd Air Force, who took part in air battles over Southern Lithuania), and even one Me 109 fighter. (83) According to the report, the results of the first day of the war for the 15th IAP

seem to be quite successful; it is strange, however, that the very next day the number of combat missions of the regiment is reduced from 202 to 24, and the list of materiel losses lists:

- 8 MiG-3s were destroyed at the Kaunas airfield;
- 11 MiG-3s burned during evacuation from
Kaunas; - 13 MiG-3 remained at the Potsunay
airfield; - 6 I-16s were destroyed at the Kaunas
airfield; - 3 I-153s were destroyed at the Kaunas airfield by the
enemy; - 1 I-153 was burned at the Kaunas
airfield. (84) It is also strange that already at 19.00 on June 22, in Opersvodka No. 03 of the headquarters of the NWF Air Force (the "forest headquarters" of the brigade commander Krupin in Panevezys), Gruzdziai was named as the base airfield of the 15th

IAP - 130 km north of the Kaunas - Potsunai region. (85) Further - more, and the next day both fighter regiments, as well as the headquarters of the 8th SAD, disappeared altogether. Front No. 05 Air Force Headquarters by 18.00 June 23: *“8 SAD - no information received due to lack of communication ... 8 SAD - no information about the basing of units was received.” (86)* Opersvodka No. 3 (“Riga Headquarters” of the NWF Air Force Colonel Rasskazov) dated 8.00 June 24: *“8 SAD - due to lack of communication with 8 SAD and its parts, the deployment could not be established.” (87)* Operation report of the headquarters of the Air Force of the front No. 06 by 18.00 on June 24: *“8 SAD. 61SHAP carried out reconnaissance in the areas ... A total of 3 sorties were made* (that is, the air regiment turned into a not very active link. - *M.S.). There were no air battles, there were no losses. There is no information about the actions of the other parts of the [division].” (88)* With regard to ground troops, in such cases, they habitually complain about the “lack of radio communications” [6] and German saboteurs who cut all the wires at once, but where could the fighter air divis

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front air force headquarters in Panevezys or Riga from anywhere on the left bank of the

Daugava? Apparently, in order to try to reconstruct the events that took place at the airfields of the 8th SAD on the first day of the war, we will have to digress from reading archival documents and turn to such a now neglected source of historical information as the memories of war participants. Fortunately, fate was merciful to some of them, and they managed to survive to this day. Nikolai Ivanovich Petrov, fighter pilot of the 31st IAP testifies:

"... On Saturday 21st, I took over as duty officer for the unit. ***At three o'clock in the morning*** (here and below it is underlined by me. - *M.S.) on June 22, the chief of staff of the SAD, which we were part of, called and ordered me* ***to announce a combat alert,*** *the chief of staff of the regiment, upon arrival at the command post, call the division headquarters ... Immediately I handed over to the chief of staff of the regiment, captain Sergeev, and announced the alarm for the regiment. Upon the arrival of the flight crew to the aircraft, soon, in a matter of minutes, green rockets from the command post of the regiment took off into the air. Recently, there have often been combat alerts (training), so* ***everything was worked out, lost, who, when, what is doing ...*** *Having received a signal to take off, they began to take off in flights, taxiing out and taking off almost from the parking lots of*

With a left turn, they headed for Kaunas, gaining 1500 meters, they saw the Kaunas airfield, the hangars were on fire, the hangar building was on fire, the regiment headquarters was on fire. Flying over the Kaunas airfield, we see ***several*** *bomb* craters *on the airfield . To the left, above 700 meters, a flight of 2 pairs of Me-110s and 4 Me-109s went west at speeds "with smoke" (i.e.,* they turned on the afterburner mode of the engines and evaded the battle. - *M.S.). Below, 6 I-153 Chaika aircraft passed on a collision course, these are neighbors from the 15th Fighter Regiment. We flew west for about 15 minutes at an altitude of 3000 m, turned back - everything is calm in the air ... Everyone landed safely. As I taxied to my seat, my technician shows a crater ahead, from about a 100-kilogram bomb.* This means that during our takeoff, ***several bombs*** *fell on the airfield , obviously from a great height. What no one saw, and besides, it was not heard, since many of their motors were noisy ...*

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They brought breakfast, but no one had an appetite, and then a Me-110 swept by at low level. The shooter from the rear hemisphere fired one burst of machine guns, but not aiming. There were no casualties...

In the future, ***until 16.00, everything was calm,*** *mostly they flew in pairs to cover their airfield and the railway junction of Kaunas ... " (90)* Let's interrupt for a while the reading of N. I.

Petrov's memoirs. The first two conclusions can already be drawn. Firstly, Nikolai Ivanovich has an excellent memory, God forbid everyone: the name of the chief of staff, the number of the regiment, the number of the neighboring regiment, the "seagulls" in the 15th IAP, the names and relative positions of airfields - everything coincides with known documents. Secondly, neither the "peacefully sleeping airfield" nor the "destroying sudden strike" is visible even through a microscope. The regiment was alerted at least an hour before the start of hostilities; in the course of numerous pre-war exercises, “who, when, what does” was worked out, the enemy’s impact on the Karmelava airfield is minimal (“several bombs fell, which no one saw, and moreover, did not hear”). The regiment is not idle, although it is mainly engaged in self-service *("mostly flew in pairs to cover their airfield"),* ignoring orders from higher headquarters to escort bombers.

Here is the time to read an excerpt from the document (report "On the work done by the 213th air base from 17.6 to 28.6.41"), in which says:

“By the end of the day on June 21, 1941, the following property was concentrated at the operational airfield of Karmelava, except for the aircraft: fuel and lubricants - 2.5 used / refueling per regiment, 5 rounds of ammunition for [aircraft machine guns] *ShKAS and BS, 2 used / sets bombs, 5 daily dachas of food, oxygen and compressed air. Vehicles (a list of 16 vehicles follows), starters - 1, weather station - 1, auto repair shop - 1, "nurse" - 1, compressor - 1, crane - 1, fire engine - 1, anti-aircraft guns - 2,* ***tractors*** *- 2. The rest of the transport remained in Kaunas to ensure the flights of the 1st squadron ... " (91)*

As you can see, there was something to refuel, shoot, fight. However, the cover of their airfield was interrupted for some reason at the very

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the wrong moment - during a raid by enemy aircraft. Judging by the story of N. I. Petrov, it happened like this: *“An order from the command post: “Link - in the air!” Lieutenant Smyslov, I and Akimov quickly on the planes. We started the engines, we taxied out - and then* ***red rockets from the command post: “takeoff is prohibited” (strange,*** but in the documents the “red rocket” is mentioned just as a signal to take off. - *M.S.). Two pairs of Me 109s appear, at an altitude of 800 - 1000 meters they pass over the airfield, then two Heinkel-111 nines approach. Explosions of bombs are heard at a distance from the airfield, it can be seen that they are being thrown along the highway. They began to fall on the border of the airfield, throwing one bomb at a time. They fall with a flight in relation to our aircraft, near which we are, almost in the middle of the airfield. A large group flew by, but only a few bombs were dropped. Probably arranged a "psychic", flying on numerous targets. When they flew up to our airfield, it seemed that such a group would have nowhere to go.* And they dropped only ***5 bombs*** *on the airfield and the borders of the airfield ... We didn’t have time to come to our senses, as* ***three pairs of Me-109s appeared,*** *passed over the airfield at an altitude of about 1000 meters. They reorganized into an elongated bearing,* ***as if over a training ground,*** *and began to shoot with aimed fire at each aircraft. First of all, according to our link* (which stopped after taxiing out in the middle of the airfield. - *M.S.) of aircraft that were not camouflaged on the airfield. We managed to run to the border of the airfield, where there was a hole dried up from water. There lay a sow with piglets. We sheltered near them, where it is drier. Enemy aircraft flew over the airfield with impunity, since there was not even a single anti-aircraft machine gun on the airfield* (see above. - *M.S.). After the assault actions of the enemy, he approached his aircraft. Oil is leaking from under the engine hood, the engine crankcase is broken. The shell hit the rudder, half of the plating on the rudder was missing (it was percale). Large damage on other nearby aircraft. Only about 8 aircraft could take off.* ***the command to land By evening, cars arrived; planes*** *that cannot be flown, if I'm not mistaken, burn. When we set off, it became known that to go to the city of*

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Riga, where the pilots will fly on the surviving aircraft, mainly the management of the regiment and squadrons ... "

So, the 31st IAP lost (left) most of its aircraft on the ground. It happened after 16.00, i.e. at least 12 hours after the start of the war. The blow of the enemy was neither the first nor unexpected. The pilots and commanders of the 31st IAP knew for certain that the war had begun. No "orders prohibiting the shooting down of German aircraft" (by the way, over the past 70 years no one has found such an order on paper, with a seal, signature and archival details), was no longer in effect.

The reason for the heavy losses *("only about 8 aircraft could take off")* – unless these losses are fictitious – is quite obvious. This is a strange (to put it very politely) reaction of a fighter regiment to an enemy air raid. Let me remind you that there were three squadrons of new MiG-3 fighters at the airfield in Karmelava. Alas, if a fighter ceases to be a hunter, it becomes a game, which was confirmed in practice when, due to the passivity of the command and flight crew of the 31st IAP, a small (three pairs, i.e. six "Messers") enemy was allowed to "shoot with *aiming fire on every plane,*

like in a training ground."

The fact that it was the "execution" of the lifeless aircraft on the ground, and not the air battle over the airfield, is eloquently evidenced by the list of losses given in the report "On the combat work of the 31st IAP". In the period from 22 to 29 June, the utterly defeated regiment lost only three pilots. Two (flight commander lieutenant Gurovsky and pilot junior lieutenant Povorov) *were "wounded during the bombardment of the Karmelava airfield on 22.6.41";* Deputy Squadron Leader lieutenant Fesenko was killed under the following circumstances: *"He was hacked to death by the propeller of an I-16 aircraft during takeoff of a pilot of another unit at the Malo-Rizhsky airfield on 22.6.41."*

In addition, 19 people from the flight and ground personnel of the regiment were missing: *"St. political instructor Shadrin did not land on the airfield when relocating from the Karmelava airfield to the Plato airfield, the rest (i.e., the 3rd squadron of the regiment almost at full strength) remained in Kaunas and fell behind on the way.* (81) To the credit of the regiment commander (who, judging by the available fragments of information, probably

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really *“alone went into battle against 6-7 enemy aircraft”),* it is worth noting that in his report not a single enemy aircraft shot down on June 22 is listed at all. Who and, most importantly, why gave

the order *(“by the evening the command was received to get into the vehicles”)* to relocate the regiment to Platon (or even to Riga), i.e. about the actual withdrawal of it from the combat zone? The report of the regimental commander did not say a word about this. The commander of the 213th air base, military engineer 1st rank Khaustov, is a little more frank:

“Communication with the division was maintained only on 22.6.41 until 14.00 hours, and from that time until 28.6.41 there was no communication with the division headquarters ... The lack of constant information from higher commanders for unit commanders about the general situation at the front, as a result of which the redeployment happened in a hurry, there was no possibility of planning and using vehicles and transporting property by second flights, it turned out to be a continuous random redeployment ...

”(92) Consequences of the “random redeployment” of comrade. Khaustov describes with dispassionate

accuracy: *“In the evening of June 22, 1941, the task was set to urgently relocate to the Platon airfield, at a distance of 295 kilometers* (judging by the map, between Karmelava and Platon 170 km in a straight line. - *M.S.). Due to the lack of transport, the following were left in Karmelava: fuel and lubricant depots - 2.5 used / refueling,* [cartridges] - *4 used / sets, bombs - 2 used / sets* (i.e. fuel was left completely, ammunition - almost completely) , *camouflage equipment and starting equipment remained ... There is no vehicle outside the unit that served the squadron in Kaunas, which was used to evacuate the families of command personnel: 2 “five-ton”, 1 passenger bus, 4 “one and a half”, 1 passenger M-1 and other special vehicles.[7] the property of the NZ part, except for the one taken to the Karmelava site, remained in place* (i.e., at the main base in Kaunas. - *M.S.), such as: kitchens on a car chassis - 12 units, a food warehouse, a clothing warehouse, an armory, a gas depot ... Currently available: fuel and lubricants - B-78 aviation gasoline 7 tons (about 20 refueling for one "flash"), B-70 aviation gasoline 2.5 tons, auto fuel 3 tons, one ammunition load for 8 aircraft ... "*

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At the base airfield of the 15th and 31st aviation regiments in Kaunas (where on the eve of the war there was one squadron of the 31st IAP and some units of the 15th IAP), there was even less order. Alexander Efimovich Shvarev testifies:

"... On the night of Saturday to Sunday, June 22, I spent the night with friends from the 31st IAP (the author of the memoirs was a pilot of the 31st IAP, but shortly before the start of the war he was transferred to the new emerging 236th IAP as a flight commander. - M.S.) . *We hear about 4 am - anti-aircraft guns firing* (instead of a combat alarm signal. - *M.S.). Before that, there was a rumor that there would be exercises. We immediately decided that the exercises had begun. But from our house the Kaunas airfield was visible. A meat factory was located near the airfield. And I suddenly saw a glow and I said:*

"Brothers, these are not exercises, look, the hangar is on fire." We quickly dressed and ran to the airfield. ***There is no one from the authorities*** (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me. - *M.S.). The hangar is on fire. We, who came running, managed to roll out planes from there. We got on the planes, and the flight commander Volchok ordered: fly out for me! We began to take off in pairs...* ***In the middle of the day, the authorities came...*** *We flew out to repel enemy attacks, "on sighted" (i.e.,* at a target visible in the sky above the airfield. - *M.S.) made 3 more sorties... On the same day the remaining*

pilots and technicians, including myself, were sent to Riga on a lorry ... " (93) We f

very "literary") B. V. Veselovsky:

"... The slumber was broken by a strong roar. I got up. In the large window, the dawn of Sunday morning, June 22, 1941, was engaged. On a grassy airfield, gray with dew, I saw funnels that blocked the entire airfield like a dotted line (the action takes place at the Kaunas airfield. - *M.S.) ... A huge fire was blazing on the territory of the 15th regiment. Suddenly, four triples of Heinkel-111 bombers appeared at a low altitude, accompanied by Messerschmitts. As best we could, we clung to the base of the ditch. Explosions of bombs covered the airfield... Red Army soldiers and several technicians ran away from*

the checkpoint and guardhouse to a small grove. We decided to get one by one to the surviving aircraft and try to take off along the edge of the airfield. The main airfield was all in craters... I rushed into

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towards the headquarters of the regiment, where an I-16 fighter could be seen in the parking lot. The car was intact. Fortunately, I came across a Red Army soldier from the guards, ***who did not have time to escape.*** *At my order, he ran for a parachute, and I rushed to the autostarter, hoping to find a driver near him. He was right there. Everything worked out well. We drove up to the plane. Out of breath, a Red Army soldier brought a parachute, explaining: "No one was there, we had to break the door."*

Having connected the ratchets of the starter and the aircraft engine, I climbed into the cockpit. As soon as I was about to give a hand command to spin up, the car door opened, the driver jumped out and rushed towards the ditch. Looking up, I understood everything. A group of bombers was flying overhead. I had to follow the example of the driver. Similar attempts to start the fighter engine were repeated twice. Finally, the propeller turned and the motor started working... Once in my native, familiar environment, I felt confident. Looking at the red tiled roofs, I turned to Karmelava ... ” (94)

Most likely, the episode noted in the history of the German fighter squadron JG 53 is also

connected with air battles in the Kaunas region. /JG-53 claimed 6 Soviet aircraft shot down within five minutes (from 16.43 to 16.48), identified as I-17 (the usual German designation for the beginning of the war, the MiG-3). (367) Group III / JG-53 was based in the Suwalki area, operated at the junction of the Western and North-Western fronts, and in this zone could only meet with MiGs from the 15th or 31st air regiment. And in the report “Results of the combat work of the 15th IAP as of June 27” mentioned above, five MiGs shot down in air combat and five pilots killed in air combat were noted ... (84) Farther than other units of the 8th SAD from the line front, at the airfields of Keidana and Makshtava, the 61st ShAP was based. The beginning of the war found this regiment "headless" - the regiment

commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mamushkin, and four commanders left for Voronezh to receive the latest Il-2 attack aircraft at that time. By June 22, five "silts" were transferred to the airfield of Vilnius, where they were abandoned (most likely without having completed a single sortie). On the combat operations of the 61st ShAP (and, let me remind you, there were 60 I-153 "gulls" in its arsenal) in the first

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On the day of the war, specific information could not be found. On June 23, the uncontrolled regiment moved to the airfields of Skvarbay and Dvinsk, then most of it flew to Platon and Riga. The command and personnel of the 61st ShAP "reunited" only on June 26 in Dvinsk. Looking ahead somewhat, we note that in just 9 days, from June 22 to July 1, the 61st ShAP completed 123 sorties, i.e. about two flights per aircraft. (95)

At the end of the story about the military operations of the 8th SAD on the first day of the war, I would like to find traces of the actions of the division commander. As noted above, combat orders, instructions and operational reports of the headquarters of the 8th SAD for June 22, 23, 24 could not be found. The only thing I can offer the reader is another fragment from Veselovsky's book:

"The commander of the regiment, Putivko, appeared from somewhere at the location of our squadron. His order was brief: "To the surviving personnel (200 people out of 205 remained alive and not even wounded. - *M.S.) of the regiment individually,* ***as best they can*** (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me. - *M.S.), get to Riga, to the headquarters of the district. Together with a classmate at the school, Lieutenant Pylaev, I headed towards Karmelava on the Kaunas-Siauliai-Riga highway ... The air now and then resounded with the roar of German aircraft carrying a deadly load. Our planes were not visible in the sky* (the author of the memoirs, like no one else, should have known the reason for this absence. - *M.S.) ... Soon an emka overtook us and stopped. The door opened, and the commander of our*

division, Colonel Gushchin, called out to us. He asked us about the state of affairs in the regiment. To our question, how are things in the other four regiments of the division, he answered:

"We don't know anything, Veselovsky. There is no communication with anyone (and this is the absolute truth, the headquarters of the Air Force of the front also could not contact the commander of the 8th SAD, who was rushing in a car to some kind of "Riga". - *M.S.). We cannot take you with us. You*

see, the car is packed. We spent the coming night in

the bushes ... " Yes, there were big problems with communication then. In his report dated July 26, 1941, Colonel Kurochkin, the then new head of the communications department of the North-Western Front, writes: " Radio communications ***have been operating almost without interruption*** *since the first day of the wa*

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- M.S.), but *the headquarters reluctantly and ineptly used this means of communication at the beginning of the war ... ” (96)*

7th GARDEN

The fighter forces of the 7th air division were much weaker than in the neighboring 8th SAD. In fact, the division did not have a single full-fledged fighter unit: the 238th IAP and the 241st ShAP were in the process of being formed, and the “old” personnel 10th IAP was equipped with one of the very first obsolete I-16s (1935 .) modifications (type 5 with an M-25 engine and two machine guns) and before the start of the war had not yet completed the rearmament on the MiG-3 (in total, the regiment received 23 “flashes”). The distribution of the flight crew was also rather strange: in the 238th IAP, which had 30 I-153s in its arsenal (not the most modern fighter for the summer of 41, but still superior to the antediluvian I-16 type 5), there were only 9 *" pilots capable of performing combat missions, ”* but in the 10th IAP, half unarmed, at least 50 (according to another document - 66) pilots were assembled. (97) The emerging 241st ShAP (commander - Major Obukhov), like most other "caps" of the Soviet Air Force, was armed with obsolete I-15bis biplane fighters, which the regiment managed to receive in the amount of 27 before the start of

the war. There were even fewer pilots - 15. However, it was the 241st ShAP, as a “steadfast tin soldier”, that retained some (sometimes excessive, which will be discussed later) combat capability longer than all other parts of the 7th SAD. On the first day of the war , *the 241st ShAP* did not lose a single (!) Aircraft - either in the air or on the ground: *readiness No. 2 consisting of 15 crews and 27 I-15bis aircraft. 2. By 11.20, 13 sorties were made to cover the 31 BAP* (bomber regiment of the 6th SAD, based at the same airfield; apparently, the compiler of the operational report had in mind “cover the take-off”, and not bomber escort at all. -

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M.S.). At 13.20, 9 sorties were made to cover the landing of 31 BAPs.

3. Regiment in readiness No. 2

from 16.00. Chief of Staff of the 241st ShAP Captain

Kuzmin. (98) In the final summary of the headquarters of the 7th SAD for June 22, 1941, in the column of the 241st ShAP there are dashes for all categories of irretrievable and temporary losses; by the end of the day, the regiment still had 27

combat aircraft and 15 crews. (50) For the sake of truth, it should be noted that the Mitava (Jelgava) airfield, located at a great distance (170 km) from the border, in the morning and afternoon of June 22 was not subjected to any strong influence of enemy aircraft, and already in the afternoon the 241st ShAP was, by order of the front air force commander, relocated even further - to the Rumbula airfield (20 km southeast of Riga). (99) From this site, the regiment operated for several days, covering the capital of Latvia from the air and performing reconnaissance and patrolling in the interests of the ground

forces: " *Operational report No. 2 of the headquarters of the 7th SAD, a*

forest 8 km south of Jelgava, by 7.00 on 24.6.41 ... 2. 241 ShAP during the whole day on 23.6.41, consisting of 13 crews on I-15bis aircraft, acted to cover the points of Gulbene, Riga. 59 sorties were made (that is, about four per pilot. - *M.S.). There were no encounters with enemy aircraft. Aircraft were called into the air randomly: by order of the Air Force headquarters and 6 SAD, the operational duty officer, etc. There was a case when, on their own initiative, the entire composition of the aircraft attacked their SB, as a result, one SB sat on its belly ... " (100)*

By the end of the day (operational report of regiment headquarters No. 05 by 22.00) on June 24, the regiment still had 23 serviceable aircraft, and the number of combat-ready crews even increased (probably due to the introduction of young pilots) from 15 to 17 people. (101) According to the report of the division headquarters compiled in the second half of July (after the withdrawal of the remnants of the 7th SAD units to the deep rear), the 241st ShAP during the hostilities carried out 229 sorties, i.e. more than the other two fighter regiments combined (10th IAP - 132 sorties, 238th IAP - 39 sorties). (102). At the same time, the losses of the regiment, armed with hopelessly outdated (without quotes) biplanes, turned out to be

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record low - if all other parts of the 7th SAD had dozens of losses, then in the 241st ShAP lost: 3 aircraft in air combat, 2 were destroyed by the enemy at the airfield, 3 were destroyed during the retreat. (103)

The beginning of the war caught the 238th IAP at the Panevezys airfield. This point, in the area of which, in addition to the emerging fighter regiment, the 9th BAP, the headquarters of the front air force (and the headquarters of the NWF) were based, starting from the early morning of June 22, was subjected to repeated attacks by German aircraft. Since neither before nor after the start of hostilities did the division command bother to redistribute the available flight personnel, two-thirds of the "gulls" of the 238th IAP stood on the ground as a "dead weight" (by the end of the day this common expression acquired a particularly gloomy meaning). Not many were able to change the situation and 9 combat-ready fighter pilots of the regiment, who completed - according to the report of the division headquarters - 23 sorties. The Germans bombed the Panevezys airfield without loss, destroying and damaging 16 bombers of the 9th BAP. At the same time, the 238th IAP itself lost one I-153 in an air battle, 3 “seagulls” were broken during landing, 3 fighters were destroyed and 12 damaged from

enemy impact on the ground. (50) In the afternoon, the regiment (more precisely, its remnants in the amount of 6 aircraft) moved to the Skvarbay airfield, while all the damaged "seagulls" remained forever at the Panevezys airfield; judging by the arithmetic, the din was thrown and about 5 serviceable I-153s. After relocating to Skvarbay, the regiment loses (maybe quotation marks would be appropriate here) communication with the division headquarters; nominally, the 238th IAP was transferred "under the operational control of the 9th BAP", which by the evening of June 22 was at the same airfield. (100) At 2 o'clock in the morning on June 23, the commander of the 7th SAD, who by that time had moved with his headquarters from Siauliai to Mitava, transmits (and in a very strange way, through the “Riga headquarters” of the Front Air Force) the following order: “9 *BAP with two "nines" at dawn on 23.6.41, it destroys enemy aircraft at the airfields of Insterb*

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Not to mention the fact that the available forces of the 238th IAP would hardly have been enough to cover two nine bombers, the distance of 250 km from Skvarbay to Insterburg made it practically (precisely practically, based on the reality of the use of I-153 fighters in the Soviet Air Force) impossible bomber escort by seagulls. However, as far as one can judge from the available scraps of information, the 238th IAP did not even try to fulfill this order. Subsequently, in the operational reports of the 7th SAD, the last mention of the hostilities of the 238th IAP disappear. By 07:00 on June 25, only one serviceable I-153 allegedly remains in the regiment, but the next day, all 6 "gulls" of the 238th IAP leave Lithuania and fly to the Bigosovo airfield. (105)

The 10th IAP (commander - Major Derevnin) on the eve of the war was dispersed at two airfields: Siauliai (the base airfield of the regiment) and Nemakshchiai. There is various information about the number and combat readiness of the “MiGs” of the regiment. If, according to pre-war information, on June 1, 1941, there were 23 MiG-3s in the 10th IAP, and all of them were considered serviceable, then in the report of the commander of the 7th SAD compiled after the defeat of the division, the total number of MiGs is reduced to 20 , of which 10 are declared defective! (25), (106)

Operations report No. 01 of the headquarters of the 10th IAP dated 13.00 on June 22 paints a picture of a fierce

battle in the air: *“At 4.20, nine enemy Me-109 fighters attacked the Siauliai airfield, fired at the air control building and the southern edge of the forest in the camp area ... In total, the enemy produced in small groups (2 - 6 aircraft) bombers 8 raids with a total of 42 aircraft and 2 fighter raids in the amount of 15 aircraft.* ***30-32 bombs were dropped*** *on the Siauliai airfield .* ***The airfield was not damaged*** (underlined by me. - *M.S.) ... ” (107)*
Immediately, we note a certain oddity in the numbers:

42 German bombers dropped 32 bombs? Something does not add up here, and I think that bomb craters are still easier to count than weightless traces from aircraft flying in the air; if my assumption is correct, then the airfield in Siauliai was bombed not by 42, but by ten times fewer enemy aircraft ... Be that as it may, but the “materiel losses” listed in Opersvodka No. 01 do not contain

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no mention of damaged or destroyed aircraft of the 10th IAP on the ground. In total, by 13.00, 5 (five) I-16 fighters were put out of action in the regiment: one was shot down in an air battle, one sat down for an emergency landing in the Rossiena area, one was broken in an accident and two "have minor breakdowns. ″ That's all. None of the 10 (or 23) serviceable “MiGs” received even “minor breakdowns”.

At the same time - if you believe the same operational report No. 01 - the pilots of the 10th IAP acted very actively: in 8.5 hours the regiment completed 91 sorties (an average of three per serviceable aircraft!) And spent 12 - 18 (as in text) air battles. There are no irretrievable losses of the flight crew at all (the pilot of the “donkey” shot down in an air battle landed safely by parachute on our territory). Yes, not a single enemy aircraft was shot down (even on paper), but given the composition of the armament of the 10th IAP, and the nervous atmosphere of the first hours of the war, this circumstance can hardly be blamed on anyone. All the most amazing things start

later. Already on the evening of June 22, in the final report of the headquarters of the 7th SAD, 8 aircraft of the 10th IAP (type not specified) appear, “irrecoverably destroyed on the ground”; the regiment itself left the airfield in Siauliai (the one that was “not damaged”) and had already moved to Plato. (108) By six o'clock in the evening on June 23 (Opsvodka No. 2 of the headquarters of the 7th SAD), the 10th IAP was in Riga, i.e. one and a half hundred kilometers from the combat zone, while the headquarters of the division was even somewhat closer to the front, in the forest 8 km south of Mitava, and " *had no telephone or telegraph communication with the units." (109)* Perhaps it was precisely due to the lack of communication that the headquarters of the Air Force of the front of the brigade commander Krupin at the same hour (Operesvodka No. 05 by 18.00 on 23.6.41) assumed that the 10th IAP was still in Plato, and even set the task of relocating the regiment back, closer to the front - to the Siauliai airfield! (110)

Nothing of the kind, however, happened, and the regiment, for some reason shrunk to the size of one link, remained in Riga. In Opersvodka No. 3 of the headquarters of the 7th SAD dated 17.00 on June 24 we read: *“10 IAP 24.6. made 3 sorties for reconnaissance in the Shilale, Vayguba area. Based at the Riga airfield.* (111) Operation report No. 03 of the headquarters of the 10th IAP dated 17.00 June 25 was also compiled in Riga. The document says that *"32 trained pilots and 34 young pilots do not have*

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aircraft, " and the regiment during the day three I-16s made 6 sorties. (112) There is not a word about the fact that three days ago there were two dozen of the newest "Migs" in the regiment. It can, of course, be assumed that they were destroyed by the enemy with another raid on another dormant airfield, but nothing of the kind is visible in the operational summary. On the contrary, *“the enemy made 3 night raids on the Riga airfield in groups of 3 aircraft; the materiel was not damaged during the bombardment, there were no losses in personnel ... ".*

57th GARDEN

The 57th SAD included three fighter regiments: the Red Banner (awarded for success in the Finnish war) 49th IAP, 42nd IAP and the emerging 237th IAP. On the eve of the war, they were deployed in an extremely strange (in the language of that era, it would be appropriate to say “sabotage”) way: the best, most trained, accumulated considerable combat experience (60 people were awarded orders and medals) 49th IAP met the war at the airfields of Dvinsk and Liksna, i.e. deep in the rear of the district, 260 km from the nearest point of the border; but the 237th IAP, which had just begun its formation, turned out to be much closer to the zone of future hostilities, at the border airfields of Orana and Perloy, the 42nd IAP was also based there.

The 42nd IAP, as far as can be judged from the documents studied, was the absolute champion in the number of "old types" fighter aircraft among all the fighter regiments of the Air Force of the western military districts - according to various sources, the regiment had from 79 to 100 combat vehicles (mainly biplanes I-153 and I-15bis). Based on the minimum figures (report of the division commander dated 19.7.41.), the 42nd IAP was armed with 56 I-153 (of which 9 are faulty), 21 I-15bis (of which 3 are faulty), 2 I- 16 (1 failed). (114) Even if we exclude obsolete I-15bis from consideration, the regiment had 48 combat-ready fighters. Pilots, as of June 1, 1941, there were 59 people. (25).

It would seem that the number of pilots and combat aircraft were in some kind of correspondence, but by the time the war began

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there was almost no one to fly in the 42nd IAP:

“42 IAP had 31 pilots by the beginning of the war, the rest were on courses and retraining, and all squadron commanders, their assistants and individual flight commanders were absent in the regiment.” (115)

And this is after a hail of orders to bring the units on high alert, which on June 15-21, 1941, fell one after another in the Baltic OVO. And such a regiment, in such a state, ended up not in distant Dvinsk, but at border airfields! *“... An hour before the enemy’s raid, all the pilots were sitting in planes and*

during the raid, everyone took to the air. 2 Me-109s and 2 of our I-153s were shot down, the pilots jumped out. In the future, the enemy repeated his raids on these two airfields in 20-40 minutes, using the following tactics: Me-109s did not actively engage in battle, but tried to drag our I-153s to a height, later they broke away from them, taking advantage of the speed advantage, entered into a dive and attacked the planes that had landed for refueling. Such enemy impact on the airfields of Orana and Perloy, located 4-5 km from one

another, lasted from 4.20 to 13.14. The combat work of the regiment from these airfields in the conditions of frequent enemy raids (80 km from the border) had no success, since the I-153 aircraft could not pursue not only the Me-109 and Me-110, but also some enemy bombers, and, despite to disperse and camouflage our aircraft, the enemy continued to shoot them on the ground after they landed to refuel. The cover planes in the air could not provide any resistance to the enemy fighters Me-109 and Me-110, which mainly attacked the airfields of the 42nd IAP ... ”(115)

This was written on August 2, 1941 (report“ Final information on combat work of units of the 57th SAD from 22.6 to 30.7.41”), but it sounds extremely modern - this is how they talk about the first days of the war today; the old story about

the “airfield sleeping peacefully” has already gone out of fashion, and now it is customary to find some kind of cunning tactical technique, some kind of “magic wand” that ended up in German hands and predetermined the inevitable and inevitable defeat. But we will not rush to conclusions.

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The first thing that catches the eye and raises reasonable doubts about the reliability of the above description of events is a strange chronology: Soviet fighters over their own airfield quickly run out of fuel and go to land, but the German "Messers" keep flying and flying as if bewitched, and they don't run out of gasoline - and this despite the fact that they still had to fly at least 100 km from their airfield to Orana (and the same amount back), so in reality they had no more than 15 - 20 minutes for air combat over Soviet airfields.

It is also difficult to agree with the categorical statement that the I-153 "gulls" *"could not provide any resistance to enemy fighters."* In capable hands, it was by no means a toy fighter. In the report "Report on the combat work of the units of the 6th SAD from 22.6 to 20.9.41," the division commander, Colonel Sidnev, writes: " *Especially at one time, Me-109, like Me-110, evaded combat with I-153 38 IAP" .* (127) Maybe Comrade Sidnev exaggerated something, but in order No. 017 dated August 29, 1941, the commander of the NWF Air Force notes that, fighting on "seagulls" (the regiment was withdrawn for rearmament later, on September 20), 38 th IAP shot down 69 enemy aircraft. (137) In the first volume

of this book, it was already noted that among the most actively fighting air regiments of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front were the 46th IAP (14th SAD), 92nd IAP (16th SAD) armed with "seagulls" , 12th IAP (64th IAD). Further, in the next chapter, we are waiting for a description of the combat operations of the 123rd and 127th fighter regiments of the Air Force of the Western Front, which became the most productive following the results of the tragic day of June 22, 1941; by a strange irony of fate, both of these regiments were not armed with the latest "flashlights" and not even good-quality "donkeys", but just low-speed I-153 biplanes.

One can also recall the "Manual on Air Combat" of 1943, where it was said: *"The excellent maneuverability of the Chaika makes it invulnerable to the clumsy Me-109, if only the Chaika pilot has a good look around. The I-153 can always wriggle out of an attack and meet the enemy with head-on fire. At the same time, it often turns out that the I-153 can fire at the Me 109, but it does not have time to turn on the Chaika.*

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You can pay attention to the fact that in almost the same words he describes his personal experience [8] of meeting with Soviet biplane fighters (he, according to his “Spanish habit”, calls them “Curtisses”) German ace Franz Schiess: *“We met with a group from 20 Curtiss fighters, whose pilots perfectly understood what to do. They began to try to get behind us and were able to take an advantageous position to open fire. The Russians quickly turned around 180 degrees and came out in front of us. In such a battle, only the lucky one could win ... "* There is, however, a much more effective way than thinking about the

plate with the performance characteristics of aircraft and quoting fragments of memoirs, a way to reveal the real picture of events - you just need to turn to other documents of the 57th SAD, namely to those that were drawn up and signed on June 22, 1941, right in the thick of things: *“Operational report No. 1 of the 57SAD headquarters, Vilnius, 22.6.41, by 10.00*

1.57 SAD at 3.25 22.6.41 announced a combat alert and by 4.00 was ready

for combat missions.

2. 42 IAP at 4.25 in the amount of 12 I-153 operated one Me 109 and the 3rd Do-17, which attacked the airfield of Orana. As a result, the enemy has no losses. Our losses: 3 aircraft require repair, one pilot and one Red Army soldier were wounded. At 6.25 two Me-109s

tried to attack the Orana airfield, were

fired on by anti-aircraft machine guns. There are no casualties on either side.

At 0900, 12 I-153s in the Orana area on the N-800m were engaged in an air battle with the 5th Me-109, which was trying to attack the Orana airfield. The enemy left the battle and went to his territory, there were no losses on both sides. One I-153 aircraft has bullet holes.

At 0930, three I-153s attacked 2 Me-109s that were trying to attack the Orana airfield. One Me-109 at low altitude went to its territory, the second, there is an assumption, was forced to land.

The regiment is located at operational airfields in the amount of 21 aircraft on alert...

…4. 42 IAP at 9.05, consisting of 3 aircraft, flew to intercept enemy bombers. As a result, the enemy is on a large

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high he went to his territory. The regiment of 32 aircraft is on alert.

5. ADDITION: at 11.10 (as in the text. - *M.S.) the Orana airfield was repeatedly attacked by the enemy, as a result, 3 aircraft were set on fire at the airfield and 2 of our aircraft were shot down in an air battle. 6. For the period*

from 3.25 to 10.00 57SAD made 30 sorties. Losses: 3 aircraft in need of repair, 2 aircraft destroyed on the ground and 2 in the air. Enemy losses are being ascertained.

57 SAD is ready to perform combat missions.

I ask you to give an airfield for relocation from the Orana airfield.
Chief of Staff Lieutenant Colonel Likhachev

Chief of the Operations Department Major

Prostoserdov. (116) If it were not for the name of the airfield, the date and number of the regiment, it would be hard to believe that Opersvodka No. 1 reflected the very event that 40 days later was described by the words “despite the dispersal and camouflage of *our aircraft, the enemy continued to shoot them on the ground ".*

In reality, no "execution" is even visible. The enemy in small groups (from 2 to 5 aircraft) tried - as far as one can judge from the document, not too boldly and persistently tried - to attack the Orana airfield. The 42nd IAP, with a constant numerical superiority, actively, although not very effectively, resisted. In a situation where the commanders of all squadrons and some of the flight commanders were absent in the regiment, i.e. the most trained pilots, the best could not be expected. Only 7 aircraft were irretrievably lost and damaged - out of at least 48 fighters of the 42nd IAP that were operational as of the morning of June 22 (the figure of 32 combat-ready aircraft indicated in the operational report is still determined by the presence of pilots in the regiment, not materiel). In addition, the 237th IAP is also based at the same airfield in Orana, which by the beginning of the war had 13 serviceable I-153s. The losses of the flight crew are single *(“one pilot was wounded”).* What's the "shoot" here? Opersvodka No. 2 has not been preserved in the archives (only a short entry *“Opsvodka No. 2 dated 23.6.41 in the*

department of ShSS” remained). There is, however, Opersvodka No. 05 of the Front Air Force Headquarters

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brigade commander Krupin), compiled by 18.00 on June 23 and containing a very disturbing message: *“57 SAD - there is no connection with the headquarters of the SAD. 49 IAP covers the Dvinsk and Liksna airfields, there is no information on the*

rest of the units. (124) Judging by the Opersvodka No. 3 compiled at 12.00 on June 24, by that time only a number remained from the 42nd IAP: “ *42 and 237 IAP did not make sorties, they prepared materiel.” (117)* Such a bleak assessment is fully confirmed by the Combat Report compiled a little earlier (with a very strange number 357) dated 24.00 on June 23: *“42 IAP. Two crews at the Dvinsk airfield, 2 crews at Liksna. The further composition of the regiment is being clarified ... ” (118)* Alas, nothing good could be found out. In operational reports No. 4 (by 22.00 on June 24) and No. 5 (by 20.00 on June 25), the 42nd IAP is not even mentioned ...

So what happened to the fighter regiment? Where, when and how was it defeated? I hope that for the reader, who has gained strength and patience to read all the previous pages of this book, such questions have already passed into the category of "rhetorical", i.e. self-evident, not requiring a detailed answer. Of course, the 42nd IAP, like many, many others, disappeared in the process of "relocation". Unfortunately, the commanders of the regiment and the 57th SAD forgot (ignored) the instructions of the Charter that "withdrawal is the most difficult type of maneuver." This "manoeuvre" was to be especially difficult for the regiment, in which by the morning of June 22, 1941, there were twice as many aircraft (including temporarily out of order) as pilots.

We find the simplest and shortest *description* of the consequences of the “relocation” in the above already repeatedly mentioned report of the commander of the 57th SAD dated August 2 , 1941 :

besides, in the division, except for two airfields occupied by 54 BAPs, there were no more airfields in the Vilnius region. Permission to withdraw 42 IAP and 237 IAP from the I-153, which was at the same airfield [Orany] *with 42 IAP in the amount of 13 crews, was received by the division commander only at 14 o'clock, and then to one of the airfields 8 SAD* (judging by the Opersvodka No. 03 headquarters of the NWF Air Force, it was the Makshtava airfield), *which was also located not far from the front and was subjected to raids* (according to Colonel Katichev, it is necessary to withdraw the fighter regiment

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was it farther from the front line, to where the enemy could not yet fly? - *M.S.). During*

the flight, the regiment commander, Major Belousov, was seriously wounded, and from that moment on, the division had no opportunity (???) *to establish contact with* ***the remnants of the regiment*** (emphasized by me. - *M.S.), which by the evening of 23.6 was transferred to Panevezys and worked on the instructions of the front air force command. Some of the aircraft of the 42nd IAP and 237th IAP were landed by me on the airfields of the 54th BAP ... From the moment the regiment commander was wounded and part of him was subordinated to the Front Air Force command, the regiment's control was disrupted, all squadron commanders were absent at that time. Subsequently, the remainder of the 42nd and 237th IAP in the amount (illegible, the first number is 1, the second is 2 or 9) of aircraft were combined into one group under the command of the commander of the 237th IAP captain Suvorov, and the pilots who remained without materiel were sent to the centers of the USSR*

to receive aircraft and for retraining…" (119) If the "remnants" of the 42nd IAP were indeed "transferred to Panevÿžys and worked on instructions from the front air force command," then this work did not last very long. According to the Combat Report No. 6 of the headquarters of the 57th SAD, on the evening of the third day of the war (June 24), the 42nd IAP and the 237th IAP were already in ... Polotsk, in Belarus, 320 km from the nearest point of the western border! At the same time, *"the regiments of the 42nd and 237th were united under the command of Captain Suvorov due to the small number of aircraft. In addition, this consolidated regiment included 10 crews of other divisions who did not know where their units were ... When relocating from Vilnius and Dvinsk, when our units left, 36 aircraft remained that could not be relocated due to damage, almost all of them were burned down " .* (120) Let me remind you once again that the NWF Air Force came into such a state of

chaos by the evening of the third day of the war. In Belarusian Polotsk, the consolidated group did not stay long, and already in Operational Report No. 8 of the headquarters of the 57th SAD, compiled by 22.00 on June 27, we read: "Consolidated IAP consisting of 42, 237, 46 (obvious typo, this regiment was in Western Ukraine , in the Dubno-Mlynov area) *IAPs and 61 ShAPs at 17.20* [consisting of] *8 I-153 and 5 I-15bis aircraft moved from the Polotsk airfield to the Idritsa airfield ... " (121)* Idritsa is a village in the Sebezhsky di

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As expected, during the “relocation”, carried out at such a pace and with such a spatial scale, a huge amount of combat materiel was lost - it is enough to compare the initial number of aircraft in the three above-mentioned regiments with the “remains” at 22.00 on June 27. The airfields of Orana and (especially) Vilnius were simply littered with abandoned "seagulls", and when on June 24 - 25 German fighters from the JG-27 squadron flew from the Suwalki region to Vilnius, they had to clear the airfield, and for this to pull off the remnants and wreckage of Soviet aircraft in a large pile on the outskirts of the airfield; there are many photographs of this. On June 25, Soviet bombers bombed the Vilnius airfield, (122) having the task of destroying, in particular, serviceable SB and Ar-2 from the 54th BAP abandoned there. It's not just technology that's gone. In the course of the relocation, people also fell behind, and not in small numbers. In the report “Content of the combat work of the air division” (for those who are already confused, this is the first of the three reports identified), signed by the commander of the 57th SAD, Colonel Katichev on July 19, 1941, without comments and assessments, it says in one sentence: *“124 people did not return during relocation from Orana and Vilnius to Dvinsk. out of 42 IAP and 63 people. out of 237 IAP.* (123)

The best fighter regiment of the division, the 49th IAP, spent the day on June 22 at the Dvinsk and Liksna airfields. Judging by the operational reports of the headquarters of the 57th SAD and the headquarters of the Air Force of the front, on the first day of the war, enemy aircraft did not show noticeable activity in the Dvinsk area, and the first raids on the airfields of the Dvina air hub occurred only “at the end of the day” on June 23. (125) The command of the Soviet Air Force also did not attempt to involve the 49th IAP in active operations, in particular, to relocate the regiment or at least several squadrons from its composition closer to the front. Nevertheless, even in these rather "hothouse" conditions, the regiment was able to suffer significant losses. The above-mentioned Combat Report with the strange number 357 (and the words *“losses in three days”* no less strange for 24.00 on June 23) reports that two I-16s were lost in air combat, one I-16 was *“crashed during takeoff”,* eight I-153 put out of action by the enemy on the ground. After that, while still not breaking the rul

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simple arithmetic, the number of combat-ready I-16s was reduced from 25 to 20, the number of combat-ready "gulls" - from 38 to 29. (118)

4th GARDEN and 6th GARDEN

The only fighter regiment that was part of the 4th SAD (38th IAP, 52 “seagulls” and 4 “donkeys”, 52 pilots) provided air defense for Tallinn, which at that time had the status of the Main Naval Base of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet. Since attacks by long-range enemy bombers (possibly using Finnish airfields) seemed quite possible to the Soviet command at that time, the issue of relocating the 38th IAP to the south, into the zone of hostilities, was not even discussed. The 6th SAD included two (not counting the emerging 239th IAP, which was practically without materiel) fighter regiments. The 21st IAP (55 serviceable

I-16s, 53 pilots) was based at the airfields of Riga and was considered an air defense regiment. From morning until late evening on June 22, German aviation did not carry out raids on the capital of Latvia, and there was neither military operational nor political sense in this. As a result, the 21st IAP (as well as the "Tallinn" 38th IAP) was practically inactive on the first day of the war. A completely different situation developed on June 22, 1941 in the sky over Liepaja (Libava). The city, port, naval base, shipyards of Liepaja, located only 50 km from the then border with East

Prussia, became the object of repeated fierce attacks by German aircraft. Signed much later, on July 30, 1941, the report “On the combat work of the 6th SAD” also notes “the complete absence of VNOS *posts at sea”* and *“the airfield in an open area was well known to the Germans ".* (128) Opersvodka No. 01 of the headquarters of the North-Western Front dated 22.00 on June 22 reports that *"Libava was bombed 13 times." (126)* All this was to be reflected by the 148th IAP of Major Zaitsev.

On the eve of the war, the regiment had 68 I-153 fighters, of which 59 were in good condition; there were 57 pilots, but of them “prepared for combat operations on 22.6. - 36 people. (128)

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One of the episodes of the combat work of the 148th IAP is described in the Combat report No. 01 of the headquarters of the 6th SAD dated 12.30 on June 22 as follows: *“10.50. Six enemy bombers bombarded the Libava airfield from H = 3000 meters* (it is worth noting how the height of bombing increases in the presence of active opposition; from a low-level flight, Goering's falcons bomb only "sleeping" or "silent" airfields. - M.S.). *The regiment took off as part of 18 aircraft to repel the bombardment. During takeoff, one I-153 aircraft burned out, four aircraft were damaged. The airfield is being restored." (129)* In the afternoon, from 16.30 to

18.09, the regiment even stormed the enemy ground troops advancing on Libau: “The *148th IAP attacked a motorcycle column on the Palanga-Polukne road with two sorties.” (130)* The losses and victories of the fighters of the 148th IAP for June 22 could not be accurately and in full established. In the list of losses of the Luftwaffe, the planes shot down on the first day of the war in the Libava region are not visible. In Operations Report No. 03 of the NWF Air Force Headquarters, by 19.00 on June 22 through the 6th SAD, the following losses of I-153 fighters are listed (in practice, these could only be aircraft from the 148th IAP): “Destroyed on the ground 4 I-153, bullet and *fragmentation 11 I-153s were damaged by holes.* (131) The losses are significant, but there is still no need to talk about the defeat and

"execution". Another thing is strange - in the mentioned Opersvodka No. 03, Riga was already named as the base for the 148th IAP by 19.00! On the other hand, in Opersvodka No. 1 of the “Riga headquarters of Colonel Rasskazov” (compiled by 17.00 on June 22), Libava is still called the base of the 148th IAP. (132) At 18.00 on June 23 Opersvodka No. 05 of the “Panevÿžys headquarters of the brigade commander Krupin” places the 148th IAP at the Siauliai airfield (!), although the text of the report says that the fighters of the 6th SAD “covered the airfield and the city of Riga, Mitava airfields , *Plato and his motorized parts in the area of Rossiena, Skaudvile”,* but Siauliai is not mentioned. (133) Finally, Operations Report No. 3 of the “Riga Headquarters” finally fixes the relocation of the 148th IAP from Libava to Riga *(“in the period 2-4 24.6. raid by enemy air forces).* (134)

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Most likely, it was during this redeployment that the number of aircraft “destroyed by the enemy by a sudden strike on the airfield” increases abruptly: in the report “On the combat work of the 6th SAD” dated July 30, 1941, according to the line of the 148th IAP, 25 aircraft are already listed , "destroyed by the enemy on the ground", and 19 aircraft "destroyed during the evacuation". (135)

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1.5. “The wind of war drove us further and further…”

On the evening of June 22, the command of the Air Force of the North-Western Front, apparently, was not yet able to fully assess the scale of the catastrophe that had begun (i.e., the “fighter redeployment” of air units). As a result of this underestimation, a quite energetic and firm Combat Order No. 02 / OP of 20.00

on June 22 appeared: *“1. The enemy, overcoming the resistance of our units, continues to develop success with his tank and motorized units in the direction of Kvedarna - Skoudas, Tilsit - Taurogen, Suwalki - Alytus. Enemy aviation for 22.6 in small groups systematically attacked our airfields.*

Weather - cumulus clouds up to 5 points, visibility 15 - 20 km, wind weak, unstable direction. 2. Our

ground units on 23.6, continuing to hold back the enemy's onslaught in the southern sector, destroy the enemy's Taurogen grouping.

3. The PribOVO Air Force (as in the text, apparently, the ban on the use of the term “front” is firmly planted in the minds of the officers of the front headquarters. - *M.S.) for 23.6 are fighting for air supremacy in the area of \u200b\u200boperations of the strike force of the 8th Army and assist in the destruction of the*

Taurogen group. 4. 6 MAD under the cover of 15 and 31 IAP during 23.6 destroy enemy aircraft at airfields in the area: Memel, Nidden, Tilsit and assist the strike force of the 8th Army in defeating the Taurogen group.

5. 7 SAD at dawn 23.6 destroy enemy aircraft in the Pilkallen, Insterburg, Gumbinen area and continue to act according to the plan of the 8th Army.

6. 57 SAD and 61 ShAP 8 SAD operate according to the plan of the 11th Army (i.e. on the southern flank of the front. - *M.S.).*

7. The first echelon strikes at enemy aircraft at airfields at 4.00 23.6, followed by a powerful strike at 7.0023.6. 8. The tension of

combat work: fighters and attack aircraft - 3 sorties each, bombers - 2 sorties each.

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9. My CP is Panevezys.

Commander of the Air Force PribOVO, Major General of Aviation Ionov Chief of Staff of the Air Force PribOVO Brigade Commander Krupin. (136) We will never know whether the commander of the Air Force of the North-Western Front himself believed that the air regiments losing the remnants of their combat capability were able to at least partially fulfill the task assigned to them. Four days later, Major General Ionov will be arrested and, after a “investigation” that dragged on for many months, he will be sho February 1942[9] . To the credit of the front air force command, it should be noted that the headquarters remained at the command post in the forest near Panevezys at least until the evening of June 24 - by the time many subordinates of General Ionov "relocated" already beyond the Daugava and further east. In any case, the word “destroy” repeated many times in orders should not mislead us about the degree of delusion of the commander of the Air Force - this was the standard term for the Soviet military language; the requirement to “defeat the enemy” is invariably present in the combat orders of the summer of 41, even in cases where the state of the troops did not allow counting on more than inflicting a “pin prick” on the enemy ...

Of course, there was no question of any cover for the actions of the bombers by the fighters of the 15th IAP and the 31st IAP: most of the combat materiel of these two regiments was abandoned, the personnel on passing vehicles and on foot "relocated" to Plato and Riga, communication with the headquarters of the division and the air force of the front was lost. Nothing - as far as one can judge from the Opersvodka of the "Panevezh Headquarters" of the Air Force of the Front No. 04 and No. 05 (by 9.00 and 18.00 on June 23, respectively) - did not help the bombers and other fighter regiments. Worse, the first blow was struck again by the Germans. On the night of June 23, German aircraft attacked the Mitava airfield, where the 31st BAP of the 6th SAD was located and the 50th BAP of the 4th SAD, which had relocated the day before from Estonia. And although the bombs do not dismantle their victims in the darkness of the night, it turned out that in this case, the regiment of Lieutenant Colonel Dobysh (31st BAP) suffered minimal losses: *“23.06. At 0230 hours the enemy attacked the Mitava airfield. Incapacitated aircraft 50 BAP twenty. From*

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8 of them burned down, 12 were damaged. In 31 BAP burned down 1, damaged 3. Losses: 2 people were injured. Part of the aircraft 50 BAP, 31 BAP and 241 ShAP were withdrawn from the strike. (138)



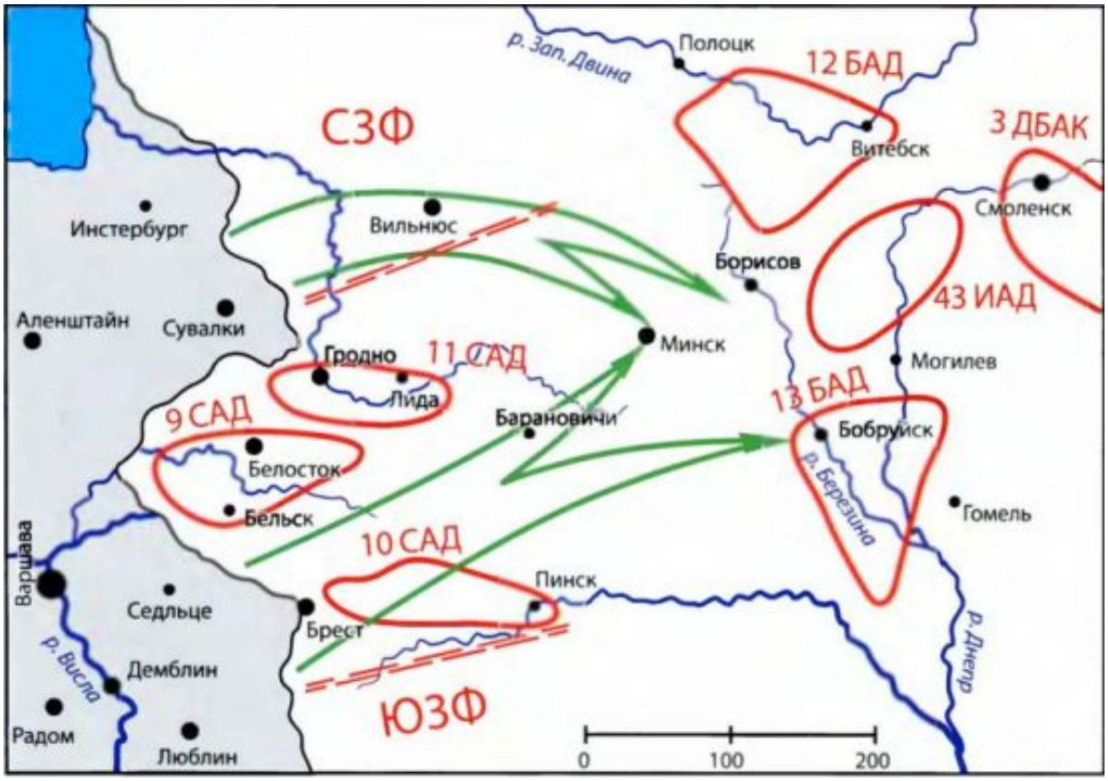
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Dislocation of the Air Force of the Baltic OVO



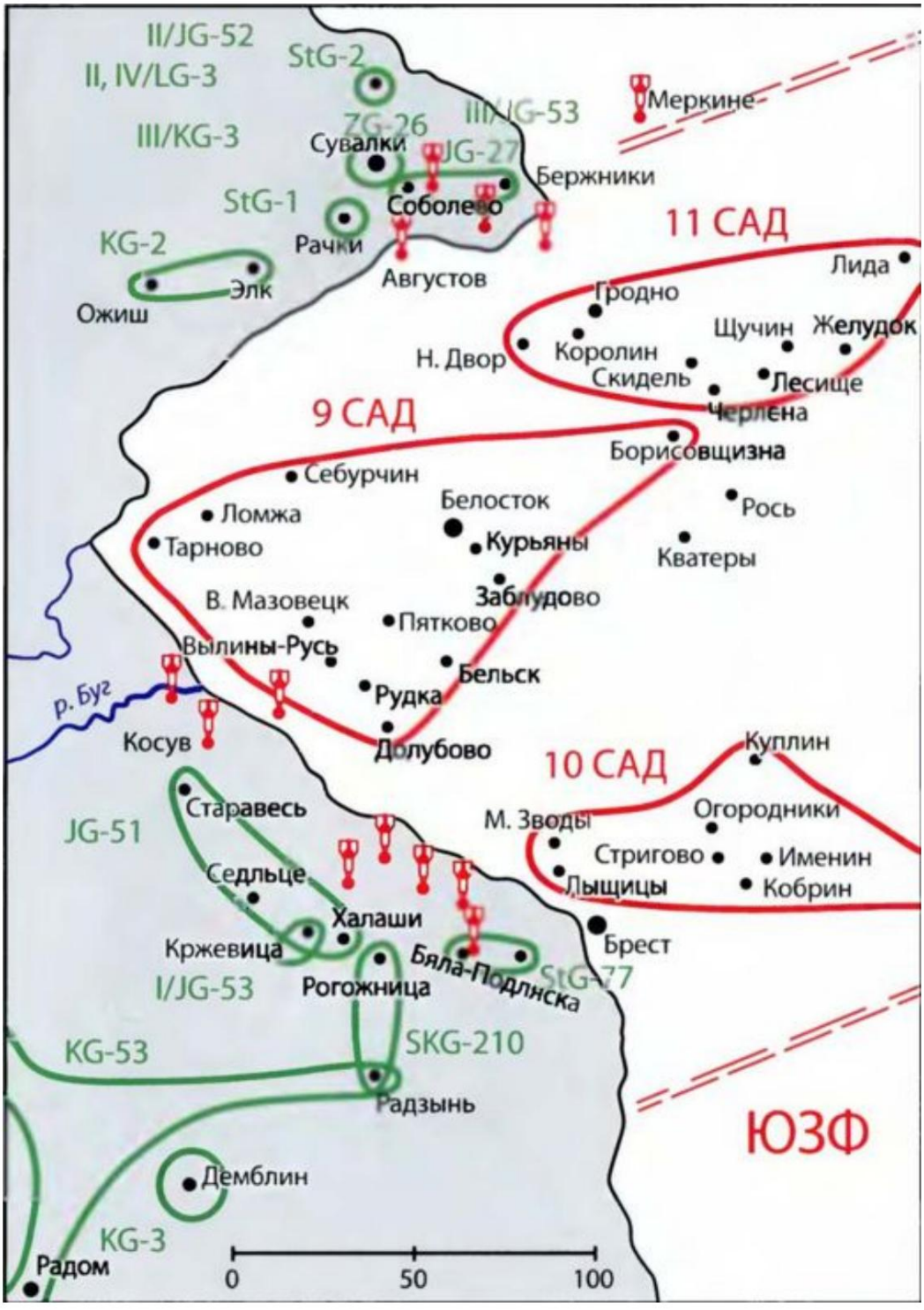
Deployment of the enemy Air Force and the first echelon of the NWF Air Force

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The deployment of the Air Force of the Western OVO

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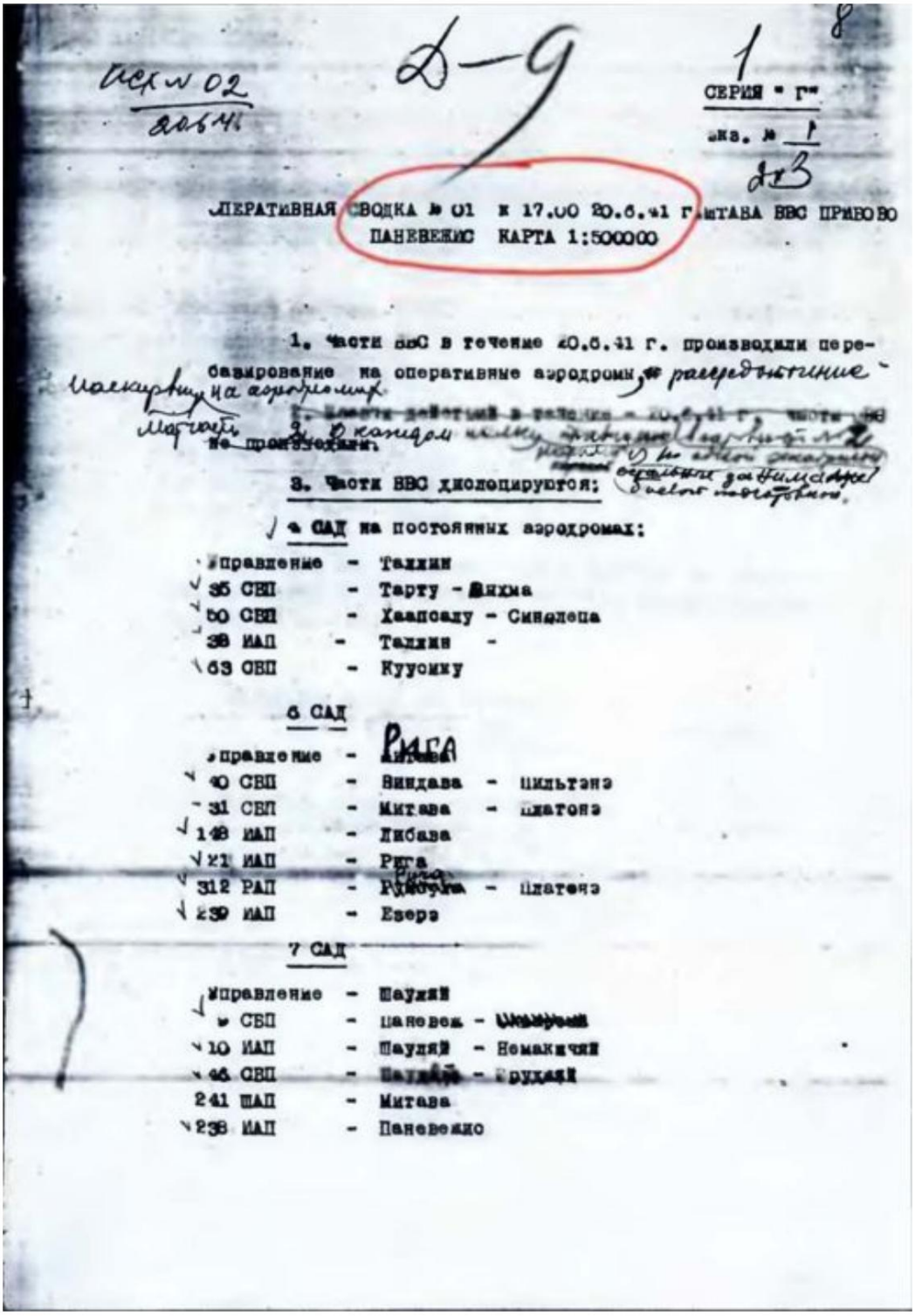
Military operations of the ZF Air Force in the first days of the war

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Dislocation of units of the second echelon of the ZF Air Force

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ОПЕРАТИВНАЯ СВОДКА № 01 к 17.00 20.6.41 г. ШТАБА ВВС ПРИВОВО
ПАНЕВЕЖИС КАРТА 1:500000

1. Части ВВС в течение 20.6.41 г. производили перебазирование на оперативные аэродромы, рассредоточение на аэродромах. Маскировку

2. Боевых действий в течение 20.6.41 г. части не производили.

3. Части ВВС дислоцируются:

4 САД на постоянных аэродромах:

Управление - Таллин
35 СБП - Тарту - Выхма
50 СБП - Хаапсалу - Синдалепа
38 ИАП - Таллин -
63 СБП - Куусику

6 САД

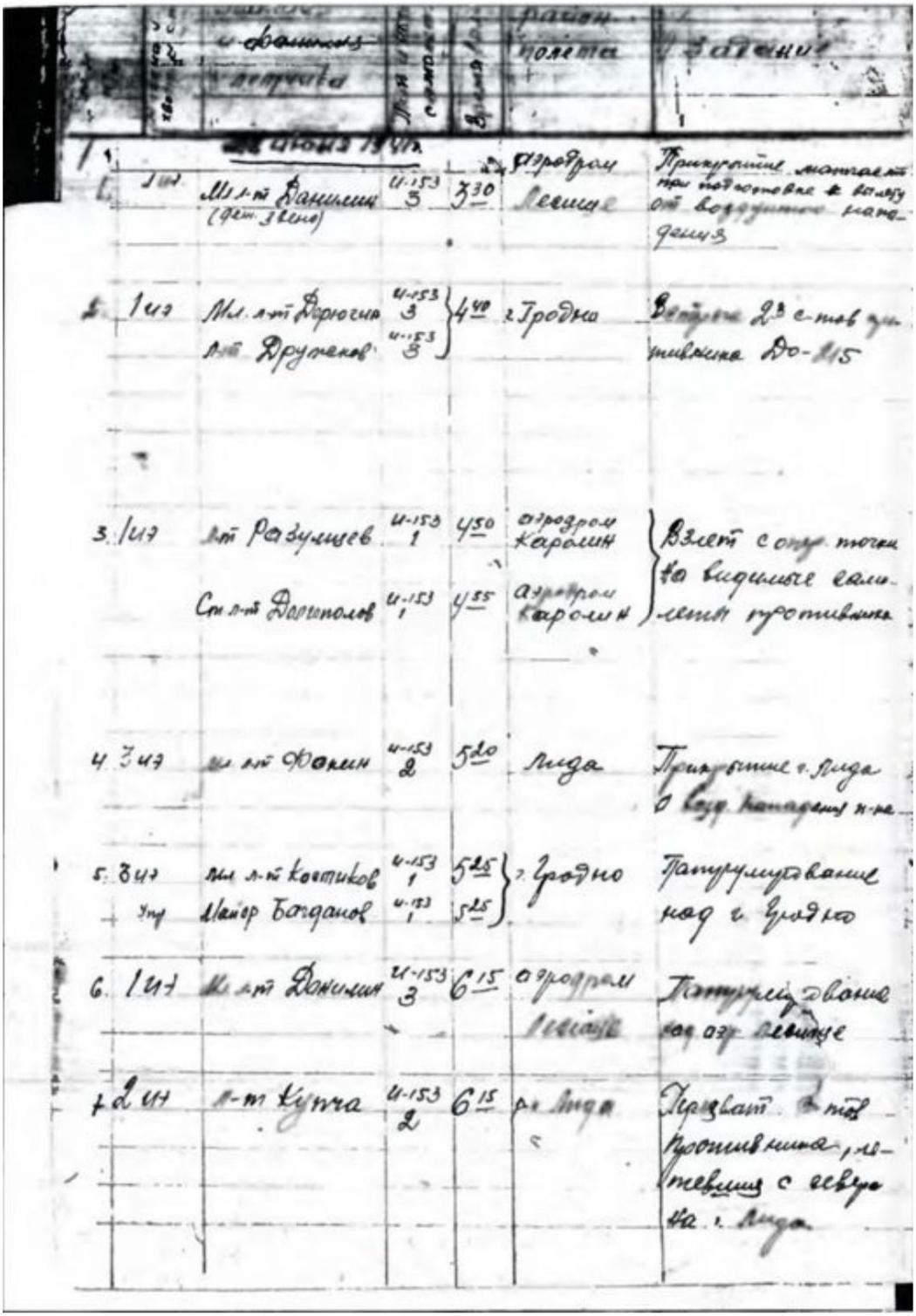
Управление - Рига
40 СБП - Виндава - Шильтэнэ
31 СБП - Митава - Шатонэ
148 ИАП - Либава
21 ИАП - Рига
312 РАП - Рига - Шатонэ
239 ИАП - Езерэ

7 САД

Управление - Шауляй
СБП - Паневеж -
10 ИАП - Шауляй - Немакищи
СБП - Шауляй - Друскай
241 ШАП - Митава
238 ИАП - Паневежис

Operational report No. 01 of the headquarters of the Air Force PribOVO of June 20, 1941 G.

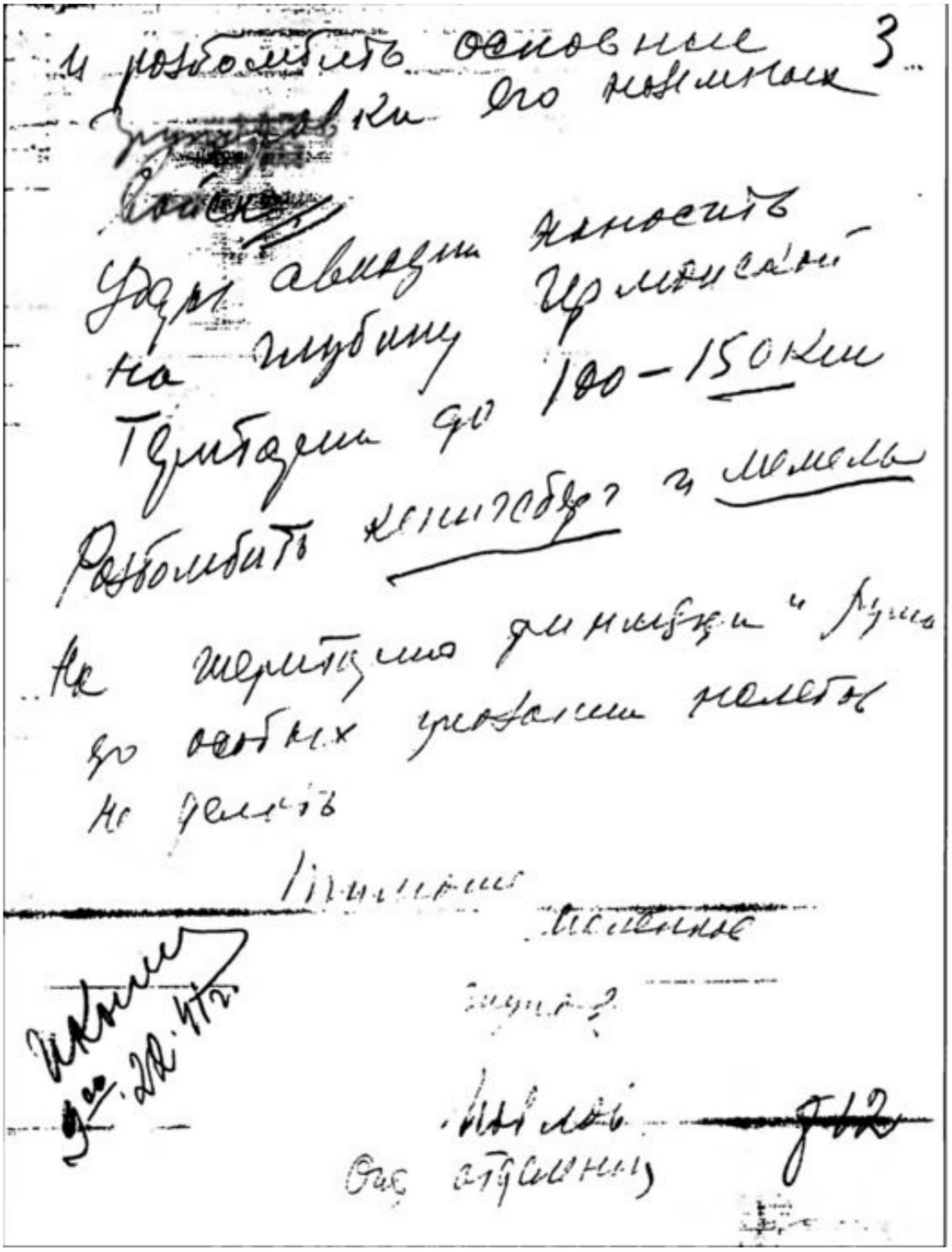
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		с фашистск.			район полета	Задание
				Июнь 1941		
1	1 ИАП	Мл. л-т Данилин (Зам. Звена)	И-153 3	3 30	Аэродром Левище	Прикрытие мостов при подходе к ним от воздушного нападения
2	1 ИАП	Мл. л-т Дорогин л-т Дружинов	И-153 3 / И-153 3	4 40	г. Гродно	Вылет 2 з с-тов прикрытие До-215
3	1 ИАП	л-т Разумцев	И-153 1	4 50	аэродром Каролин	Взлет с огн. точки на видимое самолетов противника
		Ст. л-т Дементьев	И-153 1	4 55	аэродром Каролин	
4	3 ИАП	мл. л-т Фомин	И-153 2	5 20	Лида	Прикрытие г. Лида с вост. направл. н-ка
5	3 ИАП Упр	мл. л-т Костиков / Майор Богданов	И-153 1 / И-153 1	5 25 / 5 25	г. Гродно	Патрулирование над г. Гродно
6	1 ИАП	Мл. л-т Данилин	И-153 3	6 15	Аэродром Левище	Патрулирование над аэр. Левище
7	2 ИАП	л-т Кутча	И-153 2	6 15	г. Лида	Перехват с-тов противника, летевших с востока на г. Лида

Journal of combat operations 127 IAP, entry dated June 22, 1941

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Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 2, handed over to the districts on the morning of 22 June 1941

Another bomber regiment from the 4th SAD (35th BAP), almost at full strength (42 crew on SB aircraft), on the evening of June 22, moved from the Estonian airfields of Tartu and Vyhma to the Plato airfield. (139) This airfield was also hit

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German aviation at night and in the early morning of June 23. In the morning Opersvodka No. 04 of the Headquarters of the Air Force of the Front, nothing was said about the loss of aircraft at the Plato airfield; evening (by 18.00) Opersvodka No. 05 reports that *"one SB was destroyed by enemy raids at the Plato airfield, 3 SBs were damaged." (140)* Strictly speaking, even these relatively small losses cannot be unequivocally attributed to the losses of the 35th BAP, since in Platon, there could be planes of the 31st BAP, and “flight falcons” from other bomber units. However, in the report compiled much later “On the combat work of units of the 4th SAD during the war with Germany from 22.6 to 30.7.41” ground losses increase many times:

“... 42 SB aircraft were destroyed within two days at the beginning of the war at the Platon and Mitava airfields due to the deployment of up to 3 air regiments on each (from the report of the crews), in the absence of organization (there was no senior commander), fuel and ammunition (about the "lack" of fuel and ammunition at the PribOVO airfields will be discussed below. - *M.S.) and the lack of air defense of the airfield. Such basing and use of parts of the 4th SAD is nothing more than a consequence of sabotage ... " (141)* Although nothing was said about the 4th SAD

in the above Combat Order No. 02 / OP, its bomber regiments took an active part in the hostilities June 23rd. At least, such a conclusion can be drawn on the basis of Opersvodka No. 05 of the Front Air Force Headquarters: *“4 SAD covered the mountains during the day. Tallinn, operated on enemy airfields Insterburg, Koenigsberg, Priekule, Memel and on enemy motorized parts in the area of Skaudvile, Rossiene, Taurogen. As a result of the raid, several fires were noted in the city of Königsberg.* (140) Nothing is said about the losses of the division's bombers (with the exception of the losses at the airfields mentioned above). The 35th BAP was also very active in the following days.

The events of the day of June 23 in the bomber units of the 7th SAD developed much more dramatically. At two o'clock in the morning on June 23, the 9th BAP received the following order from the division commander, Colonel Petrov: *"On 23.6.41, with two nines at dawn, destroy enemy aircraft at the airfields of Insterburg and Gumbinen." (142)*

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Just like the day before, the 9th BAP was the very first to start hostilities. In the pre-dawn haze (at 3.48, to be exact) on June 23, the SB bombers of the regiment took off. Not everyone managed to take off: *“When performing a night* (as in the text. - *M.S.) task, two aircraft burned down as a result of a collision on the ground.”* 8 aircraft reached the target - the Insterburg railway station. *“Dumped 48 FAB-100. Direct hits are seen, the station is on fire. One crew did not return from the mission.* (143) The second

sortie of the 9th BAP made from 11 to 13 hours on June 23, with large forces and with much heavier losses. 17 crews bombed German tank columns on the Taurogen-Skaudville highway, in total 102 FAB-100s were dropped. In the target area, the bombers were attacked by enemy fighters, as a result, “a group of six aircraft under the command of Art. Lieutenant Zakatov. In addition, during an enemy air raid on the Skvarbai airfield, *"2 SBs burned down on the ground."* So, during the first half of the day on June 23, the 9th BAP lost 11 bombers, after which either 20 aircraft should have remained in the regiment - if guided by simple arithmetic, or 11 - as stated in the operations report of the regiment headquarters. (143) Be that as it may, the remaining SBs disappeared on

the same day under the following mysterious circumstances: *“The Air Force Commander ordered the*

remaining aircraft to be relocated to the Birzhai airfield on the evening of June 23. . Their chief of staff of the regiment, who was following with the ground echelon, did not see them again. At 3.00 26.6 he arrived in Dvinsk, where he received an order to follow to the Korsovka airfield, and then send the flight crew to Moscow. I have no information about the combat work of the regiment for 24 - 28.6. Chief of Staff of the 9th BAP Major Bozin. 28.6 Idritsa airfield. (144) True, on the morning of June 25, the 9th BAP seemed to be found in Opersvodka No. 4 of the

headquarters of the 7th SAD, but with very strange coordinates : *42 crew. The regiment is based at an airfield on the Dvina River. The regiment commander Major Skitev is in Birzhai. The regiment is actually without*

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management, there is no connection with KP 7 SAD. The information was received by a courier from the battalion

commissar Dorofeev..” (145) More clear documentary evidence remained about the combat work of another bomber regiment of the division - the 46th BAP. As already described above, the first day of the war was extremely unsuccessful for this regiment. 10 aircraft were shot down by the Messerschmitts of the JG-54 squadron during a morning raid without fighter cover on Tilsit and Gillen, another 2 were shot down by German anti-aircraft guns; on the ground, a total of 19 SBs and Ar-2s were destroyed and damaged, after which the regiment was relocated beyond the Daugava, to the Rumbula airfield. Further events developed as follows:

“Operative report No. 2 of the headquarters of the 7th SAD, a forest 8 km

south of Jelgava, by 7.00 24.6.41 1. 46 BAP is based at the Rumbula airfield. On 23.6.41 at 09.15, 17 SB took off (one returned due to engine shaking) and bombed the Insterburg and Gumbinen airfields. The results of the bombardment are unknown, and the aircraft did not return to the airfield by the end of the day on 23.6. There are aircraft available: four Ar-2s, thirteen SBs, a total of 17 aircraft. In addition, three SBs with the receipt of spare parts will be put into operation. Combat crews -

20 ... " (146) Arithmetic is powerless here: 17 are gone, 17 are left and 3 more are under repair, which already gives a total of 37 - but after the losses on June 22, no more than 25 aircraft could fly to Rumbula "under their own power" (or one has to assume that the information on losses on the ground on the first day of the war indicated in the reports is greatly exaggerated). However, much more significant is the loss of the entire formation of aircraft during one sortie. In this case, the losses, most likely, were combat: in the report of JG-54 for June 23, 14 SB bombers were found shot down by the 1st group of the squadron in the interval from 10.07 to 10.25 south of Rastenburg, another 5 SBs were shot down by the 2nd group in the same It's high time in Insterburg. (367) Alas, an attempt to bomb enemy airfields without reliable cover by their own fighters led to a completely expected result.

The next day, Opersvodka No. 3 of the headquarters of the 7th SAD dated 17.00 24.6 briefly states: *“46 BAP without permission relocated the regiment to the Opochka airfield* (yes, Pushkin’s places

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Pskov province. - *M.S.), measures have been taken to send a person to conduct an investigation and clarify this issue.* (147) Judging by the operational reports of the division headquarters for June 41, nothing was found out. In the archival file, however, there is Opersvodka No. 04 of the headquarters of the 46th BAP from an unknown date (the document indicates 10.00 on June 22, which is an obvious typo). Opersvodka compiled at the Opochka airfield; if you believe her, then 47 (!) full crews arrived there (out of 42 - and this is not a typo - listed in the regiment on the eve of the war) with numerous technical personnel, specifically: 47 pilots, 47 navigators, 48 shooters, 96 technicians, 78 junior specialists . There were 10 combat aircraft: 9 SBs and 1 faulty Ar-2. (148) On July 10,

1941, the Military Tribunal of the North-Western Front put the last point in this tangled story in Sentence No. 0018 : *years, without any*

orders and grounds for the relocation of the air regiment and the 127th air base, after the raid and bombing of enemy aircraft on Riga, located 8 kilometers from the location of the unit and the base (i.e. Rumbula airfield. - M.S.) , *reported to the regiment commander, Major Zaitsev* (strangely, in the report of the commander of the 7th SAD, compiled no earlier than July 13, it is stated that “on June 23, 17 crews led by the regiment commander were killed.” - M.S.) about the need to relocate the regiment *and base and , not following the orders of the regiment commander Zaitsev to check and clarify the presence of the order of the higher command on redeployment, he ordered the departure of the ground echelon of the air regiment and the air base to Opochka. In addition, the defendant himself, without waiting for the departure of trains, flew away, sitting on a three-seater plane as a fifth person.*

As a result of failure to comply with the order of the regiment commander and the alarmism shown by Kanunov, part of the property of the air base and the regiment was abandoned: fuel, weapons, ammunition and the banner of the regiment, which was later found. As a result of the same, the combat order of the division commander to take off on that

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aircraft regiment to carry out a combat mission remained unfulfilled.

Based on the foregoing, the Military Tribunal of the Front found Kanunov guilty of committing crimes under Art. 193-17 p. "b" and 193-2 p. "e" of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. Guided by Art. 319, 320 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the

RSFSR, SENTENCED: Kanunov Vasily Yakovlevich on the basis of the totality of the crimes he committed, on the basis of Art. 193-2 p. "e" of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, subject to the highest measure of criminal punishment - execution, without confiscation of property in the absence of such. The verdict is final and not subject to appeal." (149)

On July 11, this sentence was brought to the attention of “all senior and middle command personnel to junior lieutenant inclusive".

June 23, 1941, the second day of the war, was the last day when the Air Force of the North-Western Front still acted (tried to act) as a kind of organized whole, controlled from a single center. In the future, the operational reports of the regiments, divisions and air forces of the front record only non-stop redeployment and scattered actions by the forces of individual aircraft, units, and in rare cases, squadrons. So, the most powerful (in terms of the number and quality of aircraft) 15th IAP by the evening of June 25 turned into two links of fighters (three

serviceable MiG-3s and three serviceable I-153s), next to which at the Mitava airfield (i.e. so far still in the combat zone!) there were 32 pilots; the regiment - more precisely, its remnants - *"provided the take-off and landing of 31 BAPs, two enemy aircraft, the Heinkel-111 type, were shot down in an air battle."* Another fighter regiment of the same division - the 31st IAP - at that time was based at the Riga airfield, having 57 pilots, 9 serviceable MiG-3s and one I-16; With these forces, the regiment carried out "4 *s / in to fight the enemy airborne assault in a day, no landing was found in the flight area." (151)*

On June 26, the 31st IAP acted more actively: 23 sorties were made, there were no own losses in the air, one Heinkel-111 was declared shot down (if this is true, then a twin-engine Junkers-88 was shot down, because in as part of the bomber groups of the 1st Air Force

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there was no Luftwaffe Heinkel fleet at all). Another night raid by enemy aircraft on the base airfield disabled three aircraft *("on the night of June 26, the equipment was bombed by the enemy, there are minor damage to three MiG-3 aircraft"),* as a result of which by the end of the day only 6 crews were in readiness No. 2. (152) The last serviceable "Migs" of

the 31st IAP were finished off under the following circumstances. On June 27, the remnants of the regiment (7 MiG-3, 1 I-16, 1 U-2) finally left the combat zone, relocating from the Riga airfield to the Kresty airfield (near Pskov). One MiG-3 was broken during landing in Kresty, the next one on June 28 *"turned to the right on takeoff, as a result, it broke the right leg of the chassis, the plane console and crushed the propeller."* On June 29, *"MiG-3 crashed into an obstacle as a result of landing with a miss, pilot V. was slightly wounded and sent to the hospital."* On the same day, *"senior political instructor N., while landing, crashed into another MiG-3 aircraft, one of them was broken and beyond repair, the second requires major repairs."* Finally, on June 30 at 11.50 *"pilot M., who flew out towards the enemy aircraft, made an emergency landing due to the destruction* (as in the text. - *M.S.) of the engine, the pilot was slightly injured." (153)* If the reader thought that

I was specifically looking for and found a particularly sloppy regiment, then he is greatly mistaken - everything is exactly the opposite. It is precisely such a detailed description of the fate of each aircraft and pilot, and the very safety of headquarters documents, that the 31st IAP was one of the best - in other units and formations of the Air Force of the North-Western Front, hundreds of aircraft disappeared, leaving no traces at all in documents. The most common phrase in operational reports and combat reports at the end of June 41: "Due to the lack of communication, information was not received." Sometimes such information was

received: *"... 54 BAP received the task of reconnaissance of the enemy in the area of Kaunas, Prienai, Alytus, followed by bombardment of the detected enemy units. The regiment did not complete the task due to the Me-110 raid and the lack of technical staff. Colonel Katichev* (commander of the 57th SAD. - *M.S.) is now investigating*

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the reason for the failure to complete the task, which will be reported later ... (154) ... *At the Opochka airfield, 1*

I-16 and 1 I-15bis were found, serviceable, up to 20 pieces were burned. On the western outskirts of the airfield, 400 pieces of FAB-100 and FAB-50 were stacked, scattered around the airfield in separate groups of 4-6 bombs. On the southern outskirts of the airfield there are 3 - 4 boxes with fuses ... (155)

... Losses: 1 I-153 was smashed during takeoff, 2 ran into each other during taxiing, 1 ran into the SB during landing ... (156) ... 4 MiG-3

fighters performed a combat mission - attacking the Liksna airfield (by that time already occupied by the enemy. - *M .WITH.). They didn't reach the target, lost their orientation, forced to land in the Gorodok area, 3 on their stomach, 1 pilot jumped out with a parachute, the plane burned down. The group was led by Major Sukhoryabov ... 3 MiG-3 fighters flew to attack the Dvinsk airfield. They did not reach the goal, they lost their orientation. They were forced to land, the planes were burned. The group was led by Major Sukhoryabov ...* (157) ... *A personal examination of the state of the Staraya*

Russa air garrison (this is already in the Novgorod region. - *M.S.) revealed the presence of disorganization and alarmism. A broken connection is not restored by anyone; many aircraft requiring minor repairs are abandoned without observation. Motor transport is chasing unnecessarily, combat means* (as in the text. - *M.S.) are not provided in a timely manner. Due to the lack of compressed air, three MiG-3 fighters were put out of action. Aircraft camouflage is weak, vehicles are driven into a circle and are not masked. The personnel is not organized, hangs out, does not know what to do. The defense of the airfield is not organized, there is no observation of enemy aircraft, there is no direct connection with air defense ... " (158)*

Of course, the general situation in the troops of the North-Western Front was no better. On June 28, 1941, the Military Council of the Front sent a report to the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR with the following content:

"The position of the front.

The 8th Army, which suffered 40% or more losses, retreats to the northern coast of the West.

Dvina. The 2nd Panzer Division apparently perished. I do not know the position of the 5th Panzer Division and the 84th Motorized Division.

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The 11th Army as a unit does not exist. The
provisions of the 5th, 33rd, 188th, 128th, 23rd and 126th rifle divisions are not I know...
I have no connections for firm control. The
military council of the front is fully aware of the significance of the Zap. Dvina…" (159) On June 29,
the NWF Military Council moved to Pskov; 200 km from the nearest bank of the Western Dvina, before that he sent the following directive to the commander of the 8th Army: *"You criminally left the*
troops to their fate and hide your skin. For such a responsible operation as the withdrawal of an entire army, it was necessary to draw up a plan, withdraw troops from line to line and firmly control the withdrawal of each formation. I demand that this be done immediately. The task force of the headquarters will return to Mitava and lead the withdrawal ... Keep radio contact with the front headquarters. You evade communication, apparently with intent, because you know nothing and do not want to know about your troops ... " (160)

A. G. Rytov met the beginning of the war in the position of commissar of the 6th SAD. His memoirs, published during the "years of stagnation" (M.: Voenizdat, 1968), are ideologically sustained in the best party traditions *("the personnel persistently studied the experience of the participants in the Khasan and Finnish events, prepared for a worthy rebuff to the enemy in case of an attack on the Soviet Motherland ... The commanders and political workers of the 6th division exposed the bestial appearance of German fascism, urged the aviators to be vigilant, to closely monitor the intrigues of the aggressor"),* but in describing the terrible defeat of the North-Western Front, even he could not restrain his emotions: *"... All living things*
retreated to the east, everything was in motion, and it was simply not possible to establish anything reliably. From the air, we followed the advance of the enemy, and this only information to some extent helped us to orient ourselves in the situation. But the wind of war drove us, like a tumbleweed, farther and farther from the western borders ... The military town adjoining the airfield was deserted. Apparently, it was left hastily. The wind slammed the doors and window sashes open wide;

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a paper blizzard… Warehouses could be seen in the distance. They were also left to fend for

themselves…" (161) Yes, quite a few warehouses were left "to fend for themselves". This fact is not only memoirs, but also operational confirmation. In a special message of the 3rd Directorate of the NPO No. 37738 dated July 14, 1941 we read:

"... The evacuation of bases and units from the front lines is unorganized, the command itself shows panic, which causes a large loss of ammunition and other types of technical supplies.

July 3 this year the 110th air base of the 6th air division was relocated from the Opochka area, the engineer Kashinien and the assistant chief of staff for rear major Shmelev, responsible for loading, left the enemy with 48 wagons of aerial bombs, having no explosives.

July 6 this year The 25th air base of the 8th air division was relocated from the town of Karamyshev, 4 platforms were submitted for the transportation of goods, however, Colonel Shevchenko ordered the stock of bombs and fuel to be blown up, the existing 9 aircraft to be destroyed, and ShKAS machine guns to be thrown into the wells. Which was done, and platforms and vehicles were used to transport personal items of command (motorcycles, bicycles, padded cars). The destruction of the materiel, fuel supplies and air bombs was not necessary, since the enemy was at a great distance from the base, there was a full opportunity to move to the rear.

The 13th, 127th and 206th air bases, during a stampede, left most of the supplies on the territory occupied by the enemy, without destroying combat equipment. The commander of the 127th air base, senior lieutenant (a strange title for such a position. - *M.S.) Chetyrkin at the Gruzdzhiai site left the enemy 5144 air bombs of various brands* (with a typical load of 6 FAB-100 per SB or Ar-2 bomber with so many bombs it was possible to provide more than 800 sorties, and this was at one, by no means the largest airfield. - *M.S.), 442,500 rifle and aviation cartridges and 10 ShKAS machine guns. 18 wagons of air bombs, 3 million air cartridges, several tons of gasoline, food, clothing and technical warehouses were left in Siauliai...*

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Battalion commissar Malozhin, senior political instructor Barybin and head of the general unit Kudryavtsev were sent to destroy the secret and top secret documentation of the 10th air regiment and the 206th base in Mitava. as a result, the documentation of these units, including the cipher, remained not destroyed during the retreat ... " (162)

On the evening of July 8 (10 days after the command of the front announced the special importance of holding the line of the Western Dvina River), Operations Report No. 15 of the NWF Air Force Headquarters was signed in Novgorod. Three air divisions (4th SAD, 7th SAD and 8th SAD) at that time were based at the airfields of Staraya Russa and Soltsy, i.e. at a distance of

350 km from the Western Dvina. The 7th SAD was armed with 13 aircraft (11 SB and 2 Pe-2) - on the eve of the war, the division had 180 serviceable combat vehicles; in the 8th SAD there were 11 fighters (all MiG-3s, of which 7 were listed as faulty) - out of 192. Surprisingly, a lot of combat aircraft were listed in the 4th SAD: 31 SB bombers remained in the three bomber regiments of the division (out of 108 serviceable as of the evening of June 21), and there were supposedly more fighters than there were (61 instead of 56, most likely, there is an ordinary typo). About the combat composition of the 6th SAD and the 57th SAD, the

Front Air Force Headquarters had no information. (163) The next day, July 9, 1941, Major General Kutsevalov, the new commander of the Air Force of the North-Western Front, issued Order No. 0039. The order actually drew a line under the history of military operations of the Air Force of the “first formation” front. Commands of two divisions remained in the combat zone (the 4th SAD and the 6th SAD - as you can easily see, these are the divisions that were further from the border on the morning of June 22 and were crushed to a relatively lesser extent by the "fighter redeployment" skating rink) and three air regiments: 31st IAP, 38th IAP, 63rd BAP. Everything else (management of the 7th SAD, 8th SAD and 57th SAD, as well as the remnants of two dozen air regiments) was withdrawn *"to restore the combat capability of the units"* to the deep rear, to the area of Bologoye - Vyshny Volochyok - Torzhok (Kalinin Reg

The 63rd BAP was ordered to transfer all the surviving bombers from the units withdrawn to the rear, thus

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it was planned to form "five squadrons of 9 SB aircraft" in the regiment . The 31st IAP and the 38th IAP should have been manned with *"the best crews from the regiments transferring equipment"* and formed in the following composition: 31st IAP - four squadrons (9 MiG-3, 9 I-16, 18 I-153), 38th IAP - three squadrons of 9 I-153s and one mixed squadron of 5 I-16s and 2 MiG-3s. (165) A total of 115 combat-ready aircraft in the Front Air Force. Three weeks ago there were almost 900 of them, and taking into account temporarily faulty ones - more than 1100 ...

However, one should not forget that the enemy had to pay a fair price (by his standards and concepts) for this success. In the skies over the Baltic states, the same thing happened as in other sectors of the Soviet-German front: even scattered, almost uncontrollable "fragments" of a huge Soviet military machine inflicted significant damage on the Germans. Far from all the commanders and pilots of the aviation of the North-Western Front hurried to fly to the rear, *"sitting on a three-seater plane as a fifth person."*

As a result, in June of the 41st, only irretrievable losses (“damage over 60% from enemy impact and for unknown reasons”) of the bomber squadrons of the 1st Luftwaffe Air Fleet amounted to 34 aircraft (15% of the original number, and if we count from the initial number of serviceable bombers, then all 18%). It is important to note that these were the best Junkers-88s at that time, which, as domestic historians have repeatedly told us, Soviet fighters of the “old types” (I-16 and I-153) allegedly could not even catch up. The losses of enemy fighter aircraft were much smaller, but also not zero. The JG-54 squadron irretrievably lost 5 Messers, the JG-53 squadron (two groups of which were based in the "Suwalk ledge") irretrievably lost 6 aircraft in June. (166)

Judging by the number of sorties (and we simply don’t have any other reliable data for June-July 1941), then the 49th IAP (57th SAD, regiment commander Major Nedelin) caused the greatest damage to the enemy and 38th IAP (4th SAD, regiment commander Major Sidnev). The pilots of these two fighter regiments completed 1,395 and 1,863 sorties, respectively - the figures for the summer of 1941 are almost unbelievable (however, we must take into account that

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for the 38th IAP, the indicated figure refers to the period until the end of July, and after July 9, the best pilots from other parts of the Air Force of the front were brought to this regiment). (179) The 49th IAP in the period from 22.6 to 16.7 declared 21 downed enemy aircraft; as stated in the report of the commander of the 57th SAD, *“the flight crew of the regiment always fought air battles boldly and persistently, never taking into account the superiority of the enemy in this battle. Pilots Murzin and Krylov repeatedly fought together with 8-13 aircraft, pilot Kirenko fought one battle on I-153 with 7 Me-109, and there were several more such examples.* (180) It should be noted that the 38th IAP completely, and the 49th IAP - basically (38 "gulls" and 25 "donkeys") fought on

obsolete low-speed biplanes I-153. The bomber units of the NWF Air Force were not inactive either, having carried out more than a thousand sorties in the first two weeks of the war, but in this case a concrete and precise determination of enemy losses is hardly possible. To some extent, only information about the number of sorties for each of the bomber regiments can be considered reliable. Analyzing them, we are again faced with the same paradox that was already noted when considering the events of the first day of the war: most of the combat work was done by the forces of just a few regiments. And this unevenness in the future, in the time interval from June 22 to the first days of July, only increases - more than half of all sorties were made by pilots of two regiments, the 35th BAP and the 31st BAP (see Table 3). It is also worth noting that the veterans of the “winter war” did not prove themselves to be anything outstanding: the Red Banner 54th BAP (201 people awarded orders and medals for participating in the Finnish campaign) and the 50th BAP with ten Heroes of the Soviet Union.

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Таблица 3

	Число вылетов	Потери в воздухе	Потери на земле
35-й БАП (4-я САД)	321	24	16
50-й БАП (4-я САД)	106	5	21
31-й БАП (6-я САД)	274	31	15
40-й БАП (6-я САД)	122	15	27
9-й БАП (7-я САД)	80	14	32
46-й БАП (7-я САД)	66	25	23
54-й БАП (57-я САД)	105	?	26

Note: the list of "air losses" includes those shot down by enemy fighters and FORM, as well as those who did not return from a combat mission; accidents and catastrophes are not included.

Strange as it may sound, but another confirmation of the high combat activity of the 31st BAP and the 35th BAP can be a large number of aircraft losses in the air, in battle. As you can see, only in these two regiments the losses in the air turned out to be significantly higher than the losses on the ground. Taking into account that in the 35th BAP, out of 16 bombers lost on the ground, 5 were considered unserviceable even before the start of hostilities, the ratio of losses in the air and on the ground will exceed 2 to 1. In the 31st BAP, out of 15 bombers lost on the ground, 8 were are faulty, and with this in mind, we get the ratio of losses in the air and on the ground as 4 to 1 - for the history of the defeat of the Soviet Air Force, the figure is almost unbelievable. The 31st BAP turned out to be the only aviation regiment of the NWF Air Force, in relation to which the list of reasons for the loss of materiel indicated (in the report of the commander of the 6th MAD) non-standard complaints about "crowded basing", "lack of airfield masking", "poor operation of the VNOS system ", “lack of an evacuation plan”, but completely different circumstances: *“The main reason for*

the heavy losses in the performance of combat missions was weak cover by fighters and the absence of complete cover during combat operations in the Tilsit region,

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Calvaria, Taurogen, Kelme. The regiment for motorized units in the district of Taurogen, Kalvariya, Kelme acted successfully and with great tension. The regiment commander, Lieutenant Colonel Dobysh, worked boldly and proactively in a combat situation. In almost all sorties, he led the regiment personally into battle. He carried out combat missions exactly on time ... " (168)

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1.6. Results and discussion

At the very beginning of the fourth chapter, we discussed some of the characteristics of the fighting in the Baltics. Now I want to draw the reader's attention to two remarkable features in the depiction and perception of the history of these events. In the summer of 1941, among the war correspondents in the Baltic States, there was no Konstantin Simonov, who would later be able to turn what he saw into a novel comparable in depth and scale to The Living and the Dead, and for the heroes of the battles in Lithuania forgotten in the bustle of the retreat (including there was no doubt that there were such people - someone, at least for a week, but slowed down the advance of the Germans to the line of the Western Dvina), there was no Sergei Smirnov, and today we know nothing about

the "Brest fortresses" of the Baltic states. The second reason why in the Soviet era the story of the death of the Baltic Military District was pushed to the very edge of public consciousness was the anti-Soviet armed rebellion that broke out there in the first days of the war. The events of June 41st in Kaunas and Riga (as well, by the way, as in Lviv and Lutsk) were completely unsuitable for a minimally honest description in the Pravda newspaper, therefore “black June”, “fatal June”, “the tragedy of June 41- we have always been associated with events on the Western Front - there, in the cities and towns of Western Belarus, the local population as a whole looked indifferently at the second (in two years) fight

of evil strangers on their poor land. The time has come to correct this defect of historical vision. This is especially necessary within the framework of the stated topic of this book, because it was in the Baltic States, in the history of the rapid defeat of the Air Force of the North-Western Front in a “chemically pure form”, that phenomenon manifested itself, which, for lack of a generally accepted term, I propose to call “fighter redeployment”. Even in the zone of the Western Front, which was destroyed at the same speed, everything was not so obvious: there, in the sky over Belarus, the Luftwaffe concentrated the largest (in number) forces, the best air units with the best commanders, there i

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the Germans really seized the airfields with a stranglehold, attacking them from dawn to noon (all this will be discussed in the next chapter). As a result, in a number of cases it becomes quite difficult to differentiate the real causes of losses, to single out the effect of "fighter redeployment" among other factors that led to the disappearance of most of the Western Front aviation aircraft. With rare exceptions (the airfields of Liepaja,

Siauliai, Orana), nothing like this happened in the zone of the North-Western Front on June 22, the 1st Air Force of the Luftwaffe was much weaker and more passive than its southern neighbor, and a phrase from Intelligence reports No. 03 of the NWF headquarters dated 12.00 on June 22 *("the enemy has not yet put into action significant air forces, limited to the action of individual groups and single aircraft")* quite adequately described the situation on the first day of the war. The redeployment of the air units of the front began mainly under the influence of the offensive of the enemy ground forces, while some of the deserted airfields were either not subjected to German air strikes at all, or these "attacks" did not go beyond the "pin prick" performed by the "Messers" link.

This is where the unique features of the North-Western Front end, then everything was "like everyone else." No evacuation services have the resources capable of ensuring the simultaneous redeployment of the entire aviation group, and even hundreds of kilometers to the rear - just like no ambulance service can cope with the situation when the number "03" calls in one evening the whole city (I'm afraid that even a digital PBX will not cope with such a task to begin with). All the more difficult was the problem of emergency evacuation of defective aircraft (including those that received even the most minimal damage). In order to save combat materiel in such a situation, a great desire was needed. And in addition to desire - also courage, initiative, the ability to take decisive, unconventional actions, in a word, everything that (to put it very correctly) was not too encouraged and developed in Soviet commanders. The result is known.

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By the way, the same thing happened with the mechanized corps of the Red Army, where the evacuation services (and the corresponding equipment, including powerful diesel tractors capable of towing even a five-turreted T-35) undoubtedly existed, but not in the amount that would allow one to immediately drag Dnieper many thousands of tanks. Was there an alternative to the panicky "rebase"? Trying to find an answer to such a question will take us very far from the discussion of aviation history topics, which is the subject of this book. Nevertheless, I note that the commanders of the 57th Air Division and the 8th Mechanized Corps (respectively, Colonel Katichev and Lieutenant General Ryabyshev), without saying a word (and most likely without even knowing about the existence of each other), expressed almost the same

same thought:

"It was necessary to hit and hit the enemy's airfields, not stopping at any difficulties, right up to the last plane ... The 8th mechanized corps could continue to pin down the enemy for several more days, inflicting losses and slowing down the advance into the depths of our territory. In this case, the remaining tanks and artillery of the corps would have been used to the end with maximum impact in battle ... "For the sake of truth, it must be admitted that these bold thoughts were expressed several months later" after the fight "...

Now, from general reasoning, let's move on to specific, albeit tedious for the reader, statistics.

Let's start with the 57th GARDEN mentioned above. As indicated in the report "The content of the combat work of the 57th SAD", as of July 18 (that is, after the division was withdrawn from the combat zone), the loss of combat aircraft in the division amounted to 207 units: 99 I-153, 26 I- 16, 21 I-15bis, 7 MiG-3, 42 SB and 12 Ar-2. Only 8 aircraft remained in service (3 MiG-3s, 3 I-153s, 1 I-16s and 1 SB), and if you do not take into account the MiGs received after the start of the war, then only 5. In short, almost the entire pre-war fleet combat vehicles was lost. At the same time, the division still nominally had 150 pilots, 142 navigators and a gunner (these two categories are not separated in the documents), i.e. more than it was - according to the documents - before the start of hostilities! The word "nominally" is not used

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by chance: 140 pilots out of 150 and 126 navigators and gunners out of 142 by that time were on retraining in an even deeper rear. (169)

Miracles, of course, do not happen, and new pilots have not been born in three weeks. Most likely, scattered crews from other air units "nailed" to the division, and young graduates of flight schools were included in the list of available pilots, who were simply not taken into account in pre-war reports. Of course, there were also losses of flight crews in the 57th SAD. They are detailed on the next page of the document. In total, in all four regiments of the division, 8 people were killed in the air and 13 people were wounded. Another person was killed and 13 wounded on the ground. In addition, 24 people (eight full crews) in the 54th BAP and 1 fighter pilot in the 49th IAP "did not return from a combat mission." (170) Simple

arithmetic shows that in a division that has lost 97% of aircraft, the loss of flight personnel in the air (including the wounded and those who did not return) does not exceed 15%. This is where simple arithmetic ends and continuous “riddles of history” begin. 8 crews did not return from a combat mission to the 54th BAP, and one to the 49th IAP. This adds up to 9, but on another page of the same report, it is stated that 31 aircraft did not return from a combat mission. (171) How can this be? How can the number of missing aircraft be three times the number of missing crews? Did the planes take off on their own, without people, and disappear without a trace over the horizon? Now let's "tweak the

sharpness" and look at the statistics of the losses of one regiment of the division - the Red Banner 54th BAP. The overall balance of the loss and availability of aircraft is quite consistent: there were 12 Ar-2s, 12 Ar-2s were lost, zero is available; there were 43 SBs, 42 SBs were lost, 1 SB is available. Where and how were they "lost"? 20 aircraft "destroyed by the enemy at the airfield", 6 aircraft "left and destroyed at the airfield". (172) This adds up to a total of 26. Were the other 28 bombers lost in the air? But this should have entailed the corresponding losses of the flight crew (maximum - up to 84 people), however, the regiment has 7 people killed and wounded in the air, who did not return from the mission - 24. Yes, theoretically this is possible - there are parachutes, there is a possibility commit

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forced landing, after which the aircraft has to be written off, and the crew remains alive, and sometimes unharmed. Theoretically, it is possible, but it all looks rather strange, especially considering that such losses in the air are by no means visible directly in the operational reports of the regiment and division for June 1941. In general, throughout the

division, there are: 91 aircraft "destroyed by the enemy at the airfield" and 33 - "abandoned and destroyed at the airfield." This is as of July 18, 1941. More than two months pass, and all the same Colonel Katichev signs the report “Results of the combat work of the 57th SAD from 22.6 to 23.9.41.” The document describes in detail the combat operations and losses at the airfields: *“From*

June 22 to September 23, our airfield network took over 73 raids, in which at least 500 aircraft participated from the enemy. By type: 270 Me-110, 129 Yu-88, 91 Me-109. From 1 to 6 enemy aircraft participated in 58 raids, from 6 to 11 in 7 raids, from 13 to 18 in 4 raids, and from 25 to 30 in 4 more raids ... The enemy lost 9 aircraft with crews. All of them were shot down in air battles by our fighters, which rose to repel the raid. A table is given indicating the names of airfields and the number of enemy air raids; all arithmetic converges - a total of 73 raids. The Germans showed the greatest activity over the airfields of Orana (12 raids), Novgorod (12 raids), Dvinsk (8 raids). (173) And everything would be clear if it were not for one strange paradox: in two months

(from July 18 to September 23), the number of aircraft destroyed by the enemy at airfields not only did not increase by at least one unit, but even significantly decreased - from 91 up to 57. (174) The “specific effectiveness” of enemy actions also deserves close attention: in order to destroy one Soviet aircraft on the ground, the Germans on average have to make 1.3 raids on the airfield and use 8.8 aircraft. From this interesting arithmetic, a seemingly simple conclusion follows: in the first two weeks of the war, the enemy made 34 raids on the airfields of Orana, Perloya, Porubanok, Dvinsk, Liksna, during which he could (based on average statistics) disable about 25 - 30 aircraft, but certainly not 91 ...

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On the eve of the outbreak of hostilities, the 57th SAD (with the exception of the 49th IAP) was based in the Orana region, Vilnius, i.e. at the very tip of the main attack of the 3rd Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht (I remind you that the Germans were already in Vilnius on the morning of June 24). It is not surprising that it was in this division that the devastating consequences of the "fighter redeployment" manifested themselves with particular clarity. **The 8th SAD** in the Kaunas, Keidany, Makshtava zone was in a slightly better position (the German infantry was advancing there, and it could not advance at the pace of the tank divisions in principle), but the defeat of this air division turned out to be so complete and deep that there was nothing left of it even reports that could be discussed (there is some reason to believe that the commander of the 8th SAD, Colonel Gushchin, was held accountable for the defeat of the formation entrusted to him, but this issue needs to be clarified).

On the offensive path of the 4th Wehrmacht Panzer Group (Tilsit-Taurogen-Siauliai highway) were the airfields of the **7th SAD.** The Siauliai airfield, as noted above, became the object of the most powerful and repeated enemy air strikes. How effective were these strikes? In the first report of the chief of staff of the 7th SAD during the war (n/n, time not indicated, not earlier than 12.00), the loss of aircraft on the ground was not mentioned at all. At 13.00 on June 22, operational report No. 01 of the headquarters of the 10th IAP states that "the airfield is not damaged", and does not contain any mention of the regiment's aircraft damaged or destroyed on the ground. And only on the evening of June 22, in the final report of the headquarters of the 7th SAD, 8 aircraft of the 10th IAP, "destroyed on the ground", appear.

Not even a month has passed, and in the report “Information on the combat work of the units of the 7th SAD during the war with Germany” (the report was signed by the acting division commander Colonel Solovyov, in the first days of the war - the chief of staff of the 7th SAD) losses 10- th IAP are dizzyingly increasing: *“In the very first two days of the war, the regiment lost on the ground from enemy air raids the bulk of the material part of the aircraft ... As a result of the loss of materiel, the regiment, as an integral combat unit, lost its value. Since 23.6.41, the regiment with an insignificant composition from the Riga airfield*

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acted by order of the NWF Air Force Headquarters. (175) The report also contains figures specifying the phrase about the loss of "the bulk of the equipment of aircraft"; it turns out that the 10th IAP lost not 8, but 45 aircraft on the ground (35 pass through the column “destroyed on the ground during an air strike” and another 10 - “destroyed during withdrawal, including faulty ones”). (176) It is worth noting that such figures and facts are accompanied in the report by the following assessment: *“The personnel and command of the regiment had good combat training and a high political and moral state ... The headquarters of the 10th IAP worked smoothly, promptly and made the right decisions on the situa*

The results of the combat work of the 238th IAP look most radical: out of 30 “gulls”, only one was shot down in an air battle, and 3 destroyed and 12 damaged at the Panevezys airfield on June 22 turn into “27 destroyed on the ground during an air strike”. In the 9th BAP, which fought very actively in the first days of the war, in principle, the same picture of an inexplicable increase in the number of aircraft lost on the ground, but with a slightly lower "growth factor". If in the operational reports compiled in hot pursuit of the events, the regiment on June 22 irretrievably lost 7 bombers on the ground and 9 more were seriously damaged, then in the final report “destroyed on the ground during an air strike” there are already 32 aircraft! (176) The air

regiments of **the 6th SAD** (with the exception of the 148th IAP in Liepaja) in the first days of the war were quite far from the main operational directions of the enemy ground forces. As a result, the "fighter redeployment" began in this division later and with much less consequences. Above, we have repeatedly noted the active and courageous actions of the 31st BAP, in which the losses of aircraft in the air turned out to be many times greater than the losses on the ground. Nevertheless, in the last days of June 1941, a wave of "relocation" covered this division as well. This was especially evident in the structure of the losses of the 21st IAP, one of the best fighter regiments of the Air Force of the North-Western Front. The regiment provided air defense for the city of Riga and on the first day of the war did not suffer any losses from enemy air strikes on airfields at all. From June 22 to July 9, the regiment lost only 3 aircraft in air battles (including those “who did not return from the mission”), but the losses on the ground amounted to 30 aircraft (of which 17 were directly designated as “destroyed o

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evacuation"). (177) It is impossible not to pay attention to the huge accident rate that suddenly arose in the "old" personnel regiment: in 18 days in the 21st IAP, 16 aircraft were irretrievably broken, and these are not new, not yet fully mastered by the MiGs flight crew , but the old and familiar

"donkeys". As expected, a very special situation developed in **the 4th SAD.** The permanent airfields of this division, deployed in Estonia, were not subjected to any influence of German aviation either on the first or on the following days of the war; there were no enemy ground troops there in June either. As a result, from June 22 to July 30, the 63rd BAP lost only 12 bombers on the ground from June 22 to July 30 (i.e., for a much longer period than in other parts of the NWF Air Force). Losses in the air turned out to be exactly twice as much - 24 aircraft; another 12 SBs are broken or damaged in accidents. (178) Two other bomber regiments of the division (35th BAP and 50th BAP) in the afternoon of June 22 were relocated to the airfields of Mitava and Platon, where they shared the common fate of the Front Air Force.

Let us now summarize the combat activity and losses of the Air Force of the North-Western Front in the period from June 22 to mid-July 1941 (see Tables 4 and 5).

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Таблица 4

	Было 21.06	Выле-ты	Сбито в воз-духе	Не вер-нулось с задания	Аварии и ката-строфы	Уничто-жено на земле
21-й ИАП	64	543	0	3	16	30
148-й ИАП	68	223	3	8	10	44
10-й ИАП	55	132+	6	0	0	45
238-й ИАП	30	39+	1	0	0	27
241-й ШАП	27	229+	3	0	0	5
15-й ИАП до 27.6	84	307	9	1	5	53
31-й ИАП до 29.6	53	206	0	0	0	49
240-й ИАП до 29.6	13	58	3	0	0	6
42-й ИАП	79	394	6	11	1	62
237-й ИАП	13	?	?	?	7	10
49-й ИАП	63	1395	6	12	12	26
ВСЕГО:	549	3526	37	35	51	357

Notes: - the 61st

ShAP (no information) and the 38th IAP (in the first days of the war the regiment was based in the Tallinn region and did not participate in hostilities) were not taken into account; - as indicated in the source, data on

the number of sorties and losses of fighter regiments of the 7th SAD (10th IAP, 238th IAP, 241st IAP)

"not complete";

- losses of regiments of the 57th SAD (42nd IAP, 237th IAP, 49th IAP) in a number of cases are indicated on the basis of data on the losses of the entire division.

It is immediately worth noting that the figures indicated in the table cannot claim absolute accuracy, the data in various reports never coincide with each other, and the time interval reflected in the documents of different regiments and divisions does not always coincide. Nevertheless, the overall picture emerges quite clearly.

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The first and main conclusion is obvious - a complete, crushing defeat took place. Lost 480 aircraft out of the original 549 (including faulty ones). Three-quarters of all casualties occurred on the ground. A closer examination of Table 4

reveals not so trivial conclusions. The number of sorties per one fighter shot down in the air is very high. Even if we attribute all the “not returning from the mission” aircraft to those shot down in air combat (which, of course, is not true), it turns out that on average 49 sorties **fall on one loss.** And one could say that this is a very worthy indicator, and for the summer of the 41st it’s completely magnificent, if there were no justified doubts about the combat effectiveness of these

departures.

One of the most important tasks of fighter aviation is to destroy enemy aircraft. As noted above, in June, in the zone of the North-Western Front, the Germans irretrievably lost "from the influence of the enemy and for unknown reasons" 45 combat aircraft. And not all of them were shot down by Soviet fighters - there were also anti-aircraft guns, there were also bomber gunners. But even if we neglect this remark, and even if we add to this list half of the aircraft of the 1st Luftwaffe Air Fleet shot down in July, then in this case it turns out that 50 fighter sorties were spent on one downed German aircraft. Neither do data on the air losses of Soviet bombers, which almost invariably remained without fighter cover, give grounds for a high assessment of the effectiveness of the NWF Air Force fighters.

Таблица 5

	Было 21.06	Выле-ты	Сбито в воз-духе	Не вер-нулось с задания	Аварии и ката-строфы	Уничто-жено на земле
35-й БАП	42	321	23	1	3	16
50-й БАП	43	106	4	1	1	21
31-й БАП (до 4.7)	56	274	28	3	4	15

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	Было 21.06	Выле-ты	Сбито в воз-духе	Не вер-нулось с задания	Аварии и ката-строфы	Уничто-жено на земле
40-й БАП (до 3.7)	54	122	9	6	3	27
9-й БАП	55	80	14	0	2	32
46-й БАП	56	66	25	0	0	23
54-й БАП	55	105	10	8	10	26
ВСЕГО:	361	1074	113	19	23	160

Notes: - the 63rd

BAP was not taken into account (in the first days of the war, the regiment was based in Estonia and did not participate in hostilities);

- data on losses in the air of the 46th BAP indicated in the source, most likely overestimated;

- air losses of the 54th BAP are corrected according to data from various sources and can be very inaccurate.

The total share of bomber losses with unexpected accuracy (still the same 87% of the initial number of aircraft, including defective ones) coincides with the figure of fighter losses. But the structure of losses is completely different. Losses in the air (132 aircraft) are already quite comparable with losses on the ground. In two regiments (35th and 31st) the losses in the air are even noticeably higher than

the losses on the ground. In the light of the many facts that have been given in this chapter, the reason for such a difference in the results of the combat activities of the fighter and bomber aviation of the North-Western Front is beyond doubt. The bomber regiments were based much further from the border, and the wave of "relocation" reached them a few days later. The bombers of the NWF Air Force were extremely active, and literally from the first hours of the war, and by the time they began their disorderly retreat, a significant number of aircraft had already been honestly lost in battle. Such huge losses were greatly facilitated by the actual self-elimination of fighter aviation (and the front air force command) from ensuring the combat work of bombers.

In total, the air units of the North-Western Front, listed in tables No. 4 and No. 5, lost 517 combat aircraft on the ground (losses

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U-2, UTI were not taken into account). To this number you can, without the risk of making a mistake, add almost all the aircraft of the 61st ShAP, and this is another 60 units. In the first paragraphs of this chapter, it was shown in detail that a "sudden" attack by enemy aircraft in relation to the Baltic PMD can be written exclusively and only in quotation marks. Having freed ourselves from the inappropriate epithet "sudden", we will try to approximately estimate (alas, it is not necessary to talk about exact numbers) the losses from the "first strike".

Strictly speaking, only the events and losses of the first half of the day on June 22 should be attributed to the category of “first strike” - after Molotov’s speech on the radio at 12.00, the collective farmers in the Pskov and Novgorod outback already knew about the outbreak of war. However, the existing documentary base does not allow "tweaking the sharpness" to such an extent, so we will continue to talk about the losses of the entire day on June 22, 1941.

Opersvodka No. 1 / OP of the "Riga Headquarters" of the Air Force of the Front by 17.00 on June 22 reports that *"up to 35 aircraft were destroyed and up to 27 damaged on the ground."* In Riga, they simply did not imagine the real picture of the rout that had begun? Perhaps, but the “forest headquarters in Panevezys”, located much closer to the combat zone, calls (Operesvodka No. 03 / OP by 19.00 on June 22) even smaller numbers: “Total losses for 22.6.41 in the PribOVO Air Force: 35 bombers, 30 fighters. ” Total losses, i.e. taking into account those shot down in the air, of which, according to the same report, there were 39 (29

bombers and 10 fighters). Of course, the Operations Reports of the Air Force Headquarters were not complete, and they do not reflect the whole picture of losses. Summing up all the information available in the reports (summaries, combat reports) of the headquarters of regiments and

divisions, today in a calm atmosphere we come to the following figures: - bombers: 16 destroyed on the ground, 29 damaged; – fighters: 32 destroyed on the ground, 26 damaged; - total: 48 destroyed on the ground, 55 damaged. Finally, let's take into account the entry in the Journal of Operations of the Army Group North dated June 22, 1941: "Of the 750 enemy aircraft *expected in this area, 185 were destroyed."* With a very modest "overstatement factor

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allows us to assume 70 - 90 Soviet aircraft actually destroyed in the air and on the ground. From this number must be subtracted at least 50 aircraft, undoubtedly shot down in the air by German fighters and anti-aircraft

guns. The final conclusion from all this mess of numbers is very simple: the irretrievable ground losses of the first day of the war amount to no more than ONE-TENTH of the total number of aircraft of the NWF Air Force, irretrievably lost (abandoned, burned, abandoned) on the airfields empty during the retreat.

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Chapter 2 ASH AND DIAMONDS

In the previous chapter, we could see how uncertain and ineffective the Soviet Air Force acted even in those areas where enemy aircraft were many times inferior to them in numbers, and the advance of enemy ground forces in the first days of the war was insignificant (Western Ukraine) or even zero (Bessarabia). In the 1st chapter, military operations were considered in the zone of the North-Western Front (Baltic OVO), where Soviet aviation, having a two-fold numerical superiority over the enemy, was literally swept away by an avalanche of randomly retreating ground units. Now we come to the history of the most tragic events of the beginning of the war.

In the zone of the Western Front (Belarus), the enemy concentrated the most powerful grouping of ground forces (Army Group "Center" as part of the 9th and 4th field armies, 3rd and 2nd tank groups), in terms of the number of tanks and tank divisions superior the other two Army Groups ("North" and "South") combined. From the air, Army Group Center was supported by the largest aviation grouping (2nd Air Fleet of the Luftwaffe), better armed than others (here, in the main strike zone, the enemy concentrated all Ju-87 dive bombers and all multi-purpose Me-110), led by the most experienced and successful leaders. In terms of the number of strike aircraft (bombers, dive bombers, attack aircraft), the 2nd Air Fleet surpassed the other two (1st and 4th), combined.

As expected, under such conditions, the defeat of the Air Force of the Western Front turned out to be quick and crushing. However, even in this environment of chaos and catastrophe, there were air units, commanders, pilots who fulfilled their duty with honor. All this will be discussed in this chapter.

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2.1. “The enemy is showing signs of complete disorganization…”

The Western Special Military District, on the basis of the command and troops of which the Western Front was deployed, was the second (after the Kyiv Special) in terms of numbers and combat power in the Armed Forces of the USSR. In accordance with the pre-war plans of the high command of the Red Army (Directive of the b / n People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and the Chief of the General Staff of the Spacecraft to the commander of the troops of the Western OVO, April 1941),

the following tasks were set for the troops of the Western Front: “... By striking the left wing of the front in the general direction *on Sedlec, Radom to help the South-Western Front to break the Lublin Radom grouping of the enemy ... On the 3rd day of the operation, seize Sedlec with mobile units and on the 5th day cross the river. Vistula; the main forces on the 8th day to reach the river. The Vistula is ready to cross it. In the future, keep in mind actions on Radom* (200 km south-west of Brest. - *M.S.) with the aim of completely encircling the enemy's Lublin grouping in cooperation with the Southwestern Front. To ensure the main blow of the front, deliver an auxiliary blow in the direction of Bialystok - Warsaw, with the task of capturing Warsaw and putting up defenses on the river. Narew. The stubborn defense of the armies of the right wing of the front in the sector of the river. Neman,*

Ostrolenka firmly cover the directions to Lida and Volkovysk - Baranovichi ... ” (181) The war that began on the morning of June 22 found the troops of the Western Front on the move, at a time when they did not have time to either complete the deployment of the planned offensive grouping or start building an impromptu defensive grouping. In the randomly formed "first echelon" of the front (3rd, 10th, 4th armies) there were 13 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions, 4 mechanized corps (i.e. 8 tank and 4 motorized divisions). Another 11 rifle divisions were on the march, at a distance of 100 to 350 km from the border, with the task of reaching the deployment areas provided for by the plan by July 1.

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the emerging mechanized corps (17th and 20th), located in the depths of the front line (in the Baranovichi and Borisov regions, respectively), were "mechanized" only in name. In the deep operational rear of the front, in the zone of Vitebsk, Smolensk, Gomel, three armies (22, 20, 21) of the Second Strategic Echelon were deployed (see Map No. 3). The concentration of these armies of the GC reserve was to be completed only by July 3-5. The

incompleteness of the deployment and the lack of mobilization of the troops of the district was aggravated by the strange carelessness of the command of the Western OVO. To this day, it has not been possible to find (which, however, cannot - given the ongoing situation with the closed archives of the former USSR - serve as the basis for categorical statements) documents that would testify to decisive actions to increase the combat readiness of troops in the last pre-war days - similar to the fact that tried to make the command of the neighboring Baltic OVO.

Despite the fact that the concentration of German troops near the border was quite accurately identified by intelligence, despite the distinctly audible rumble of engines of Wehrmacht tank columns advancing towards the border, the commander of the Western OVO, General of the Army D. G. Pavlov, did not accept everything possible within the framework of his powers (and the restrictions imposed by the “big game” of the Kremlin) measures to bring the troops entrusted to him into a combat-ready state. Some decisions of the district leadership - such as the withdrawal of many anti-aircraft units to the district training ground east of Minsk, the concentration of two dozen artillery regiments of the 10th Army at the Chervony Bor training ground near the border, the deployment of two rifle divisions in the barracks of the Brest Fortress, the deployment of the 22nd tank division (14th MK) in a military town overlooked by the enemy at the very line of border pillars - do not find a rational explanation at all and for many years remain the subject of fierce disputes in memoirs and journalistic lite

The outlines of the border (the “Bialystok ledge” protruding far to the west), the nature of the terrain and the road network (the impassable area of forests and swamps in the Bialystok region and to the south of it, the presence of the Brest-Minsk and Vilnius-Minsk main roads) suggested a quite obvious plan of action for the German troops:

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infliction of two powerful strikes by mobile formations under the bases of the "Bialystok ledge" with the subsequent encirclement of Soviet troops. Variants were possible only in determining the depth of the operational breakthrough and, accordingly, the size of the "cauldron" being formed. The

Soviet command, as can be judged from the content of the ZapOVO Cover Plan, assumed that the enemy would strike in the directions of Suwalki - Lida, Suwalki - Bialystok, Siedlce - Belsk, Brest - Baranovichi; in other words, it was assumed that the depth of the enemy's strikes would not go beyond the so-called. Western Belarus. The command of the Army Group "Center" and the 3rd tank group of the Wehrmacht offered a much more decisive option, with the strike of the 3rd TGr through Vilnius to Polotsk and Vitebsk, the 2nd TGr from Brest to Bobruisk, Rogachev, followed by the encirclement of the entire group of Soviet troops located to the west of the line of the rivers Western Dvina and Dnieper. However, the Wehrmacht High Command rejected these proposals as adventurous and decided to "confine itself" to the encirclement of the troops of the Western Front with the closure of German tank wedges in the Minsk region.

As part of the GA "Center" there were 31 infantry, 9 tank, 1 cavalry and 7 "settlement" (including separate motorized units and formations of the Waffen-SS) motorized divisions. Formally speaking, the numerical superiority of the Wehrmacht was very modest - 48 German divisions against 43 Soviet ones (two cavalry divisions of the Red Army are taken into account here as one "settlement division"). On the side of the advancing (Wehrmacht) there was no quantitative superiority in tanks. So, in the four mechanized corps of the Western Front (that is, not counting the emerging 17th and 20th MKs, not counting the tank regiments of cavalry divisions and hundreds of light amphibious tanks as part of rifle divisions) there were 2345 tanks, and tank divisions were armed with GA "Center" had a total of 1936 tanks (to this number one should also add about 280 self-propelled guns of various types as part of separate divisions of "assault guns" and self-propelled "tank destroyers").

In such a situation, the outcome of the defensive operation in Belarus (if we take into account only military-operational considerations,

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leaving out everything else) was determined mainly by two factors. Firstly, the ability

of units and formations of the first operational echelon of the Western Front to delay, relying on natural (the rivers Bug, Biebrzha, Neman) and man-made (about 500 pillboxes of the Grodno, Osovets, Zambrovsky and Brest fortified areas) defensive lines, the offensive of numerically superior enemy forces on 3 - 4 days. This would make it possible to complete the main part of the

mobilization measures (planned - of course, completely disrupted in reality - the terms of mobilization were 1 - 2 days for rifle divisions, 3 - 5 days for tank and motorized divisions), resupply the troops with assigned personnel and vehicles, and also significantly compact defense by reaching the front of 11 fresh infantry divisions of the "second echelon". From the point of view of the Soviet charters of that time (PU-39), defense against numerically superior enemy forces was considered as a norm, and not at all as special “force majeure” circumstances (“clause 369. Defense aims to break or *tie up the offensive of superior forces by stubborn resistance the enemy with smaller forces ... p. 370. The defense must withstand the superior forces of the advancing enemy, who has powerful means of suppression ...”).*

Secondly, the ability of the 6th mechanized corps to deliver a powerful counterattack. This almost fully equipped mechanized corps was stationed in the Bialystok region (i.e., in the very center of the "ledge") and even before the start of hostilities received 1131 tanks (including 452 of the latest T-34 and KB), 294 tractors / tractors, 4779 vehicles and 1042 motorcycles. Probably the most promising would be the strike of the 6th MK in the direction of Warsaw, which was less than 100 km from the then western border

along the highway. In Warsaw, there was the headquarters of the GA "Center", the most important logistic supply bases, and a large railway junction. The enemy had, in fact, nothing to stop this blow. Resolutely massaging forces in the directions of the main attack (i.e., at the bases of the "Bialystok ledge"), the German command inevitably weakened the center of its operational formation, where 10 infantry divisions extended "in a thread" covered a section of the border with a length of

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150 km. According to all the canons of military science, such a “thread” could not withstand the concentrated attack

of a thousand tanks. In reality, the possibility of launching a counterattack along the Bialystok-Warsaw line was not even discussed (at least, nothing is known about this - neither from documents, nor from memoirs). The 6th mechanized corps was sent first to the south, to Velsk, and then in the opposite direction, to Grodno. In fact, the counterattack of the horse-mechanized group of the Western Front (6th and 11th mechanized corps, 6th cavalry corps) was reduced to scattered and uncertain attempts to stop the advance of the German infantry in the area south of Grodno (near the towns of Sidra, Kuznitsa, Indura), which the enemy appreciated as *"separate attacks (10 - 20 tanks each) of local*

importance." (182) On the evening of June 25, the command of the Western Front issued an order for a general withdrawal to the Lida-Slonim-Pinsk line, but for the demoralized and already practically uncontrollable troops, this order served only as an impetus for the beginning of a disorderly retreat. On June 26, Field Marshal F. Bock, commander of Army Group Center, writes in his diary: *"The enemy is showing signs of complete disorganization." (183)* On the same day, the following phrase appears in the report of the headquarters of the 9th Wehrmacht Army: *“The discovery in the forests of undamaged tanks without crews allows us to conclude that they [the crews] are waiting in safe shelters for the moment to attack.” (184)* The fantasy of the German generals was not enough to suggest another reason for the appearance of abandoned tanks on the sides of forest roads ...

On June 27-28, the German "tank wedges" closed at Minsk. In the Bialystok-Minsk strip, a gigantic (with an area of about 60 thousand square kilometers, which is slightly smaller than the territory of Belgium and Holland taken together) a "boiler" of encirclement arose. On July 1, the morning report of the headquarters of the 4th Wehrmacht Army stated: *“Stubborn fighting continues only near Zelva, in other areas the enemy offered little resistance, in part there were signs of his complete demoralization. The number of prisoners and trophies is increasing, their total number is still difficult to establish.* (185) On July 3, the following figures were given in the operational summary of the headquarters of Army Group Center: *“To date, captured, destroyed or captured: 116*

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prisoners of war, 1505 guns, 1964 tanks, 327 aircraft. Their number is increasing. Other trophies are not countable. According to incomplete data, the losses of the 4th and 9th armies, the 3rd tank group are: 2876 killed, 7514 wounded, 965 missing. (186) By July 5, in the

documents of the Center headquarters, the number of prisoners rises to 217,000. (187) In the final report of the headquarters of the GA "Center", compiled at the end of September 1941, it is stated that in the Bialystok-Minsk region 3188 tanks, 1830 guns were destroyed or captured, 338.5 thousand people were taken prisoner. (188) These figures are quite consistent with the well-known estimates of Soviet historians, according to which the irretrievable losses (killed plus missing) of the personnel of the Western Front by July 9 amounted to 341 thousand people, and the counted number of wounded was 77 thousand people. (189) Taking into account the 1 to 3 ratio of the number of killed and wounded in the wars of the 20th century, as well as the fact that the enemy's losses in this operation turned out to be ten times smaller, the assumption that the irretrievable losses of the troops of the Western Front consisted mainly of prisoners, seems quite realistic. It should also be

recognized that the use of such expressions as "encirclement ring" or "enemy tank wedges" in relation to the history of the defeat of the Western Front in June 1941 is nothing more than a concession to the inertia of the established tradition. The German tank columns, which

traveled 300-350 km along the "gorge roads", sandwiched in the thicket of Belarusian forests and swamps, were no longer "wedges", but rather "thin steel threads". The tip of one of these "threads" (probably, we are talking about the advanced detachments of the 7th German Panzer Division), judging by the report of the head of the garrison of the mountains. Borisov dated June 28, 1941, was in the following condition: *"Directly against the river. Berezina there are no large parts of the enemy. Separate tank detachments operate along the main highways with protection from them in the form of separate patrols (usually tankettes) by force from squad to platoon.* (190) The crossing of the strategically important line of the Berezina River in the area of Bobruisk was carried out by the 3rd tank

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division of the Wehrmacht with such forces (report of the commander of the 47th Rifle Corps, Major General Povetkin): *“29.6.41 at 11:30 in the Shatkovo area, 4 enemy tanks crossed. In the area of the railway bridge Bobruisk and Domanovo, an enemy of unknown numbers also crossed. At the same time, up to 11 vehicles with motorized infantry and up to 5 tanks approached the*

crossing at Shatkovo ... ” (191) Nothing like the front line that was, for example, created in November 1942 around the 6th Wehrmacht Army surrounded at Stalingrad , the Germans could not create in Belarus (strictly speaking, they did not even try). Only the outer eastern bypass of the Minsk "cauldron" had a length of more than 550 km. To build a defense on a front of such a length, according to Soviet charters (PU-39), about 120 - 160 rifle regiments were required, and even arithmetically, there were only 36 motorized infantry regiments in the 9 tank and 6 motorized divisions of the Center GA. In practice, some motorized infantry units operated inside the “cauldron”, and the 3rd and 4th tank divisions advancing on Bobruisk-Rogachev were, in fact, outside the “cauldron”. With such a density of operational formation, the Germans could not prevent the breakthrough of the encircled - if it had been organized and persistently carried out (and even

supported by a deblocking strike from the east) - according to all the canons of military science. It is worth recalling here that in June 1944, during Operation Bagration, the Red Army used the forces of four fronts consisting of 156 rifle and 12 cavalry divisions to defeat the German GA Center on the same terrain and almost within the same geographical boundaries, 12 tank and mechanized corps, 18 separate tank brigades with a total of 2.3 million people. (192) However, even with such a concentration of troops, it was not possible to create an “encirclement cauldron” at least comparable

to June 41st in geometric size (not to mention the number of encircled and captured enemy troops). Finally, it is necessary to take into account that the “encirclement” of the Western Front took place in an area overflowing with fuel and ammunition depots[10] . On t

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material means of warfare - from aviation gasoline to individual dressing packages in the amount of 40 million pieces. These stocks were designed to provide combat operations not only for the troops of the border districts (future fronts), but also for formations of the Second Strategic Echelon, and not for one week, but for several months. So, 264 thousand tons of

fuel were concentrated on the territory of the Western OVO - and this despite the fact that the full refueling of one mechanized corps weighed "only" 1.2 thousand tons. By June 29, on the territory of the district occupied by the enemy (i.e., in the strip from the border to the Berezina River), there were more than 60 large warehouses, including 10 artillery, 25 fuel, 14 food. In total, in all the district warehouses of the Western OVO (as early as August 1966, the Military Historical Journal had the imprudence to inform readers) *“6,700 wagons of ammunition of various types” were accumulated.*

Is it a lot? In 1944, while conducting grandiose offensive operations, the Red Army spent an average of 9,254 carloads of ammunition per month. The entire Red Army along the entire vast stretch of the Soviet-German front. As for the Western Front alone, from March 1943 to March 1944 it used up 16,661 carloads of ammunition, i.e. about 1400 wagons per month. By June 22, 1941, 27 million artillery rounds (not counting mortar rounds) were concentrated in five western border districts, which approximately corresponds to the actual five-month expenditure of the entire active army in 1944-1945. (193) Really in the summer of the 41st they were not enough for two weeks?

The answer to this rhetorical question is obvious. Along with the German tank wedges (and often significantly outstripping them) rolled a wave of growing chaos, panic and disorganization. It was this “wave” that swept the vast space of the so-called. "cauldron of encirclement" and led in the final and very soon to the disappearance of the troops of the Western Front as an organized armed force. German aviation made a huge

contribution to achieving this result. Columns of retreating Soviet troops stretched for many kilometers, huge crowds of people near bridges and crossings became objects of ruthless, non-stop strikes from

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air. For the first time in the centuries-old history of extermination by people of each other, it became impossible in principle to escape from the advancing enemy, death falling from the sky overtook everywhere, and this terrible fact completely paralyzed the ability and will to resist. *“From the constant and cruel bombardment, the infantry is demoralized and does not show stubbornness in defense ... The main losses and, most importantly, panic are inflicted by enemy aircraft, which works all the time on strafing flights with almost impunity ... Composite battalions sent to the front with the beginning of mortar and aviation training [of the enemy] it is impossible to keep”* - such passages from the documents of June 41st can be quoted ad infinitum ...

As well as the grouping of motorized ground forces, the available forces of the 2nd Air Force of the Luftwaffe were divided approximately equally and concentrated at the northern and southern bases of the "Bialystok ledge", while in the center of the operational formation, at the "point of the ledge", a huge void gaped (see Map No. 4). As in other sectors of the Eastern Front, units and formations of the 2nd V.f. relocated to airfields in the border zone with the USSR in the last 5-10 days before the start of the invasion; many air groups, until the last moment, fought in the skies over the Mediterranean, North Africa and the English Channel. The natural consequence of this

was the low level of staffing and combat readiness of materiel. So, for example, in three air groups of the 53rd bomber squadron (2nd air corps, the southern flank of the Tsentr GA), with a staffing strength of 120 aircraft, there were actually 80 He-111s, of which in combat readiness on June 22, 1941 was only 50 units. Things were not much better on the northern flank (8th Air Corps), where the two groups of the KG-2 bomber squadron included only 42 combat-ready aircraft, and these were the Dornier Do-17Z, the same “latest” developments of the mid-30s. s, like the Heinkels in the 53 squadron.

The fighter units (only 10 air groups) were much better equipped, but even among them one can find the III / JG 27 group, where by June 22 only 14 Bf-109 Messers were in good condition, and not the newest modification E. Probably, it was the "urgent" pace of the formation of the group that led to

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extraordinary (in comparison with other Luftwaffe Air Fleets) "mixing" of air groups. So, two groups and the headquarters of the KG-3 bomber squadron were based in the Deblin area, and the third group of this squadron ended up at the Suwalki airfield, in another air corps, 270 km to the north. Three groups of the JG-53 fighter squadron were divided in the most bizarre way: the 1st group was in the south, in the Siedlce region, the 3rd in the north, in the Suwalki region, the 2nd (without one squadron, moreover) - even further north, in East Prussia and as part of the 1st Air Fleet. The absolute “record” was set by the JG-52 squadron, one group of which was in the Suwalki region, and the other a thousand kilometers to the south, in Romania, near Bucharest and

Ploiesti. But the most dangerous (for the Germans) consequence of the extremely tight deadlines for the deployment of the 2nd Air Fleet near the borders of the USSR was the concentration of more than a thousand combat aircraft at two dozen airfields. As a result, basing two or even three air groups at one airfield (a phenomenon completely unthinkable in the Soviet Air Force on the eve of the war) became quite an ordinary thing. And if on the southern flank at least half (7 out of 15, to be exact) of the groups received “its own” airfield, then on a narrow strip of the “Suwalk ledge” German air units were packed like herrings in a barrel: 14 air groups were based on 7 airfields. In particular, three groups (I / ZG-26, II / ZG-26 and III / KG-3) at the Suwalki airfield, three groups (III / JG-27, II / JG-52, III / JG-53) at Sobolevo airfield

(15 km southeast of Suwalki). A kind of record was set at the Praschnitz airfield, where by the morning of June 22, 1941, 143 combat aircraft of four different types had gathered: 6 Me-110 (headquarters of a squadron of dive bombers StG-2), 77 Ju-87 (headquarters and two groups StG-2), 38 Bf 109 (fighter group II (Sch.) /LG-2) and even 22 relic Hs 123 (braced biplane with fixed landing gear; the first, not very successful and already at the end of 1938, discontinued attempt create a dive bomber) from the composition of 10./LG-2. Of these aircraft, 43 were listed as out of order, and in the event of an air or artillery strike on the airfield, they would not even be able to take to the air.

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All groups of fighters and dive bombers were based no further than 20 - 35 km from the border, and the group II / JG-27 at the Berzhniki airfield (Berzniki) in the "Suwalk ledge" was, without exaggeration, in the visibility zone of the border pillars. Even the bomber units (with the exception of two groups of the KG-53 squadron at the airfields of Gruetz and Radom) were at a distance of no more than 50-100 km from the border. In the presence of an energetic and stubborn enemy, such a basing could result in heavy losses for the Germans on the very first day of the war ...

The main striking force of the 2nd Air Fleet was seven groups of dive bombers; 273 "Junkers-87" (of which 183 were in good condition). It was they who paved the way for the German tank divisions, moving further and further into the depths of Soviet territory (that is, breaking away from their own infantry and, which is especially important in this case, artillery). A relatively small number of aircraft were "multiplied" by their exceptionally active use. *“By the evening of the first day, ”* Hans Rudel writes in his well-known memoirs “Pilot” of the “piece”, Hans Rudel, “ *I had already made four sorties to the front line between Grodno and Volkovysk* (it still needs to be clarified that on June 22, 1941, Rudel arrived in his unit not earlier than noon. - *M.S.) ... We bomb tanks, anti-aircraft artillery and ammunition depots intended to supply tanks and infantry. The same thing - the next day, the first flight at 3 am, the last landing - at 10 pm. You have to forget about a good night's rest ... "* Groups of dive bombers continuously advanced after the advancing ground forces and took off from

airfields located 5-10 minutes from the front line (in relation to the situation in Belarus on June 41, it would be more accurate to say -" from the object of attack "). This made it possible to make several short sorties at one refueling with a return to their airfield only to hang a new portion of bombs [11] in popular rumor, and in the reports of the headquarters of the Red Army - about the huge numerical superiority of German aviation. — .

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The multi-purpose Me-110s were also used quite successfully (for the Germans). As you know, this twin-engine two-seat aircraft was originally conceived as a long-range fighter. The combat operations of the initial period of the 2nd MB showed that a 7-ton low-maneuverable vehicle for air combat against "normal" fighters was of little use. Already during the Battle of Britain, the Germans tried to turn the Me-110 into a light high-speed bomber by installing two bomb racks under the fuselage, on which two 250-kg bombs could be suspended. It was this version of the Me-110 that was equipped with the SKG-210 squadron, two groups of which on the morning of June 22, 1941 were at the Rogozhnichka airfield, 60 km west of Brest. However, the most effective for the first days of the war on the Eastern Front was the use of the Me-110 as an attack aircraft. Quite powerful, by the standards of the summer of 1941, small arms (two 20-mm cannons with an ammunition load of 180 rounds per barrel and four 7.7-mm machine guns in the forward fuselage) during strafing attacks made it possible to turn standing aircraft into a sieve "on peacefully sleeping" (or abandoned by personnel) airfields.

The general composition of the 2nd Luftwaffe Air Fleet at the beginning of the war was as follows:

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Таблица 6

Северный фланг, 8-й авиакорпус	Южный фланг, 2-й авиакорпус
Истребители	Истребители
III/JG-53 38 Bf-109 F (36)	I, II, III, IV/JG-51 160 Bf-109 F (121)
II/JG-52 39 Bf-109 F (37)	I/JG-53 41 Bf-109 F (35)
II, III/JG-27 84 Bf-109 E (49)	
II (Sch)/LG-2 38 Bf-109 E (37)	
Бомбардировщики	Бомбардировщики
I, III/KG-2 82 Do-17 (65)	I, II, III/KG-53 86 He-111 (54)
III/KG-3 44 Do-17 (18)	I, II/KG-3 83 Ju-88 (66)
Пикировщики	Пикировщики
II, III/StG-1 81 Ju-87 (54)	I, II, III/StG-77 115 Ju-87 (87)
I, III/StG-2 77 Ju-87 (42)	
Многоцелевые	Многоцелевые
I, II/ZG-26 78 Me-110 (51)	II, III/SKG-210 83 Me-110 (74)

Note: the number of serviceable aircraft is indicated in brackets.

In addition, there were 16 Me-110s in the staff units of the dive squadrons, and the LG-2 squadron included a unit equipped with 22 Hs-123 single-seat biplane dive bombers. Total in service with the 2nd V.f. there were 400 fighters, 295 "horizontal" and 295 dive bombers, 177 multipurpose Me-110. A total of 1167 combat aircraft, of which 855 units were in good condition (315 fighters, 203 "horizontal" and 200 dive bombers, 137 Me-110). It is worth noting that the intelligence of the Air Force of the Western Front estimated the enemy's grouping quite accurately - in

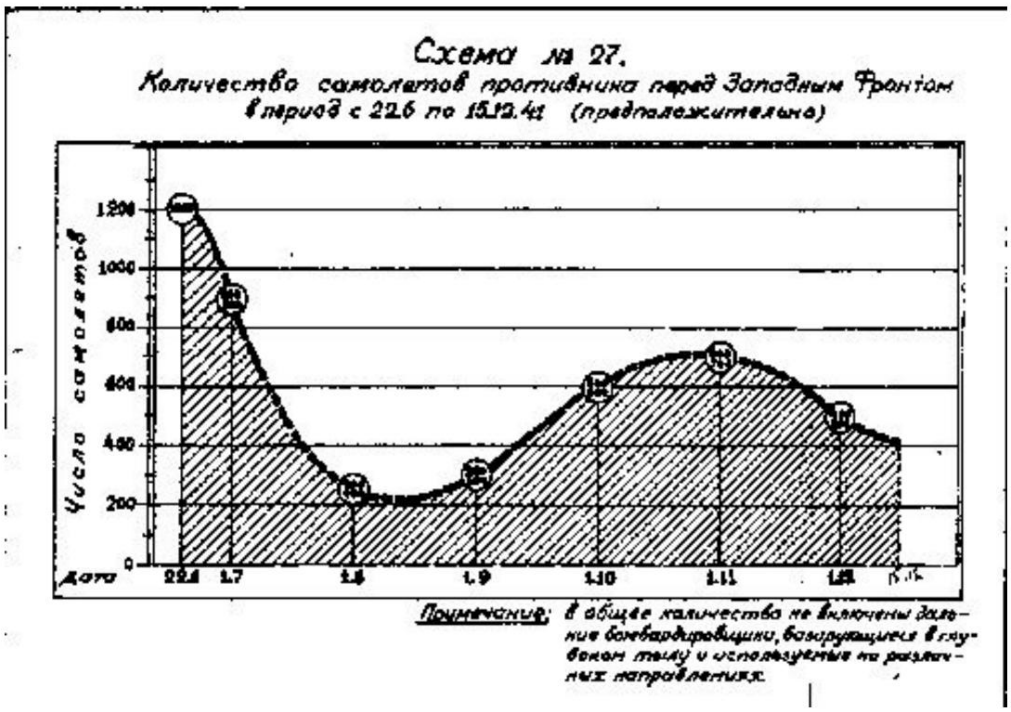
Intelligence Report No. 015 of July 4, 1941 we read: "In *total, the enemy concentrated up to 1000 aircraft in the zone against the Western Front ..." (194)*

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2.2. With a dream of a "future war"

On the eve of the war, the Air Force of the Western Special Military District (the future Western Front) included six air divisions (9th SAD, 10th SAD, 11th SAD, 12th BAD, 13th BAD, 43rd IAD) and four separate air regiments: two reconnaissance (313th RAP, 314th RAP) and two so-called. "Reserve" (161st and 162nd). In addition, from the very first day of the war, the 3rd long-range bomber air corps operated in the Western Front, consisting of two divisions (42nd DBAD and 52nd DBAD). A total of 12 fighter, 18 bomber (including the 3rd DBAK), 2 assault air regiments [12].

This grouping was armed with (not counting the reserve and reconnaissance regiments, not counting the outdated I-15bis and RZET, not counting the latest and not mastered by the Yak-1 and Il-2 pilots, but taking into account the bombers of the 3rd DBAK) about 1680 combat aircraft (920 fighters and 760 bombers). (195) One and a half times more than the enemy.



Estimation of the number of enemy aircraft (supplement to the report of the headquarters of the Air Force of the Western Front for 1941)

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The technical condition of the materiel in the ZapOVO Air Force was much better than in the German air squadrons fighting for the second year. In general, for fighter aircraft of the Western OVO, the production of motor resources was only 27%. (201) As of May 15, 1941, out of 273 "gulls" only 11 were under repair, out of 246 "donkeys" of the latest modifications (with M-62 / M-63 engines), not a single (!) Aircraft was under repair , and even out of 96 very ancient I-15bis only 10 were under repair. as of June 1, 1941) the superiority of the aviation of the Western Front over the 2nd Air Force of the Luftwaffe in the number of serviceable aircraft was almost twofold (1550 versus 855). (25)

However, an assessment of the quantitative balance of forces only on the basis of these figures will be very inaccurate. First of all, it should be noted that if the grouping of German aviation was concentrated almost at the “border pillars” and could be put into action with its entire mass from the very first minutes of hostilities, then “two echelons” are clearly visible in the operational formation of the ZapOVO Air Force: the first (11th, 9th and 10th mixed air divisions), deployed in Western Belarus, in the strip 50 - 100 km from the border, and the second (two bomber and one fighter divisions), stationed in Eastern Belarus, at a distance of 400 - 500 km from borders (see Map No. 3).

Comparing this mileage with the performance characteristics of combat aircraft of that era, we find that the 43rd IAD, in principle, could neither take part in air battles near the border, nor escort the bombers of the 12th BAD and the 13th BAD. As for these two (and there were no others in the Air Force of the district) bomber divisions, taking into account the real level of combat training of flight crews, flying at full range (800 - 1000 km) was for them a difficult, unusual, "unexpected" test, and one sortie per day per crew could in such a situation be the highest possible result (such a disappointing forecast is especially true for the 12th BAD, two regiments of which were armed with Su-2 short-range bombers or even obsolete

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reconnaissance biplane RZET). The bomber regiments of the 3rd DBAK were based even further to the east, in the Smolensk region and to the south, at a distance of 600-700 km from the border.

Yes, planes fly fast, and during half of the daylight hours (at the end of June in our area this “half” is 8-9 hours) they could all be concentrated on border airfields (the Germans flew their planes much further, from Greece and Crete to East Prussia), but aircraft and pilots are only a small part of the complex of people and equipment that makes an aviation regiment or division combat-ready. The redeployment of all ground services required at least several days. In any case, that the compaction of the operational formation due to the relocation of the "second echelon" forward, to the west, that the compaction due to the relocation of the "first echelon" back to the east, it required high organization, order, discipline, and well-functioning interaction with ground forces. All this was not enough in the Red Army even in peacetime, without an enemy in the sky and on the ground ... If we compare the number of combat aircraft of the 2nd V.F. Luftwaffe only with the first echelon of the ZapOVO Air Force, then the picture changes radically: instead of a significant numerical

superiority of Soviet aviation, a small (850 versus 760 - if we count only serviceable aircraft) superiority of the enemy is obtained. Taking into account the fact that the “mixed air divisions” (11th, 9th, 10th) were actually, from the point of view of their actual composition, “fighter divisions”, the situation in the sky near the border is as follows: almost two-fold superiority in fighters from Soviet aviation with overwhelming the superiority of the Luftwaffe in the number of bombers and attack aircraft. At the same time, one must also take into account the fact that light bombers (SB, Ar-2, Pe-2), which were in service with front-line aviation, raised a bomb load 2-3 times less than the German He-111 or Ju-88. But that's not all. In the fighter regiments of the 9th SAD, starting from the winter of 1941, the process of re-equipping with new MiG-1 / MiG-3 fighters was going on, while aircraft of the “old types” (I-16 and I-153) remained in significant numbers in units . Thus, there were fewer fighter pilots in the

9th SAD than aircraft, and,

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accordingly, not all combat vehicles considered above could be simultaneously lifted into the air. This is a fact, and it is mentioned in hundreds of publications. In assessing this fact, other facts should be taken into account. For example, it is desirable to translate the expression "there were fewer pilots than planes"

into the language of specific numbers. The division had 360 (including all serviceable and non-serviceable) fighter aircraft (235 MiG-1 / MiG-3, 73 I-16, 52 I-153) and 305 fighter pilots (hereinafter, data from the “Report on combat and numerical strength of the units of the Air Force of the Western Front ”, compiled over the signature of the chief of staff of the Air Force of the front, Colonel Khudyakov, in early July 1941, after the defeat took place; in the report of May 15, all the figures are slightly larger). (199), (200) Taking into account the 10 - 15 - 20% of defective combat vehicles of the aircraft that were

inevitable for aviation at that time, there were rather less than pilots. However, the pilot is different for the pilot. The column *“fly independently on combat aircraft”* takes into account a slightly smaller number of them (and this is not surprising - on the eve of the war, young graduates of flight schools came to combat units in a continuous stream, who were not always included as “independently flying” in the reports of the Air Force headquarters). Without digressing into the discussion that even these young pilots may have had the qualifications to at least overtake the plane from the border airfield to the east (after all, they were graduates of the aviation, not the culinary school), let's move on to the comparison the number of "self-flying" with the number of corresponding aircraft. As expected, there were much more pilots trained to fly "old types" fighters than "donkeys" and "gulls" (287 people). According to the

“flashes”, the situation is as follows: (199), (223) 41st IAP - 56 aircraft, 66

trained pilots; 124th – IAP - 70 and 64;

126th IAP - 50 and 60 [13]; 129th IAP - 57 and 36. As you can see, serious problems could arise only in the 129th IAP, in the rest, the number of pilots trained for independent flights on “flashlights” is quite consistent with the number of aircraft. Yes, and the "problems" of the 129t

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there are no combat vehicles in a war, and the presence of a significant reserve, which makes it possible to immediately put serviceable aircraft into operation to replace those damaged in battle, should be regarded as a great tactical advantage. Moreover, this advantage will equally manifest itself even in a defensive, even in an offensive operation. The only situation in which 36 pilots for 57 aircraft becomes an insoluble problem is a rapid retreat; so impetuous that there is no time to bring 10 pilots from the 41st IAP of “their” division by car (i.e. from the Seburchin airfield to the Tarnovo airfield, 45 km in a straight line) ...

Another topic (problem) that only the lazy did not write about in historical books in Soviet times is “an acute shortage of airfields”. There were “very few” airfields in Western Belarus, and even those that were available, in the spring of 1941, started major repairs, as a result, there was no way to disperse the air units and “get them out of harm's way”. Above, we have already mentioned how the enemy “dispersed”, forced to land 2-3 air groups on one airfield! However, the enemy is not a decree for us, and therefore we turn to documents and figures describing the real state of the airfield network of the Western OVO. The Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian

Federation stores the annual report of the Air Force Command of the Western Front for 1941 (f. 208, op. 2589, file 94). It is a very voluminous document, with a large number of appendices. Appendix No. 54 provides a complete list of the district's airfields "as of June 22, 1941." The list occupied five pages of neat typescript, and it ends with the following phrase: *"In total, there were 231 airfields within the ZOVO on 22.6." (196)* Two hundred and thirty-one airfields for 32 air regiments. For comparison, it is worth noting that in three internal districts (Moscow, Oryol and Kharkov) there were a total of 127 airfields. (197)

However, in this case, we are not interested in the entire airfield network of the district (from Bialystok to Smolensk), but in that part of it, on which three air divisions of the "first echelon" of the district Air Force could be based. These are the 12th (Bialystok), 14th (Grodno) and 15th (Kobrin) "air areas" (in other documents they are called "districts

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airborne"). There were respectively 24, 20 and 14 airfields. If we take a tough approach and exclude from this list airfields that are less than 800 meters in at least one dimension (Zambrov, Chervony Bor, Korolin), then 55 airfields remain in the first echelon. Fifty-five airfields for 12 air regiments. The sizes of

almost all of them are expressed in four-digit numbers, most often 1200x1000 are found, but sometimes 1500x1500 (Quaters) or 1600x1200 (Belsk). For the I-16 fighter of the latest (i.e., the heaviest) modifications, the takeoff run was 210 m, the run length was 380 m. - run did not exceed 400-500 m. For the heaviest modification of the SB bomber, the take-off run was 310-520, and even the latest high-speed Tupolev bomber ("product 103", the future Tu-2) had a run length of less than 650 meters. In other words, all types of fighters and front-line bombers of the Red Army Air Force, both available and promising, could take off from the 55 airfields mentioned above. And this amount was not enough?



Soviet fighter I-153 "Seagull".

"Very little!" - Soviet historians cheerfully answer. And in the multi-page report of the headquarters of the Air Force of the Western OVO "On the state of the district Air Force units on May 15, 1941" (it was declassified only 65 years after the start of the war, 08/16/2006) a very specific

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explanation - why and for what "little". In the first lines of the section “The state of the airfield network of the Air Force of the district”, the number of airfields *“suitable for modern equipment ”* is immediately reduced to 109 (moreover, it is the geometric dimensions of the airfield, and nothing else!). It must be assumed that some incredibly “modern” materiel was expected - the Germans, with their not the most outdated materiel, operated from Soviet airfields in Belarus already starting from the 3rd - 4th day of the war, and acted in such a way that the memory of this did not fade even for 70 years ... The following describes an extensive program for the reconstruction of existing and construction of new airfields, according to which by the end of the year it was supposed to have 222 regular airfields, including 62 with concrete runways [14] After which, on page 139, the compilers

The document proceeds to the final

conclusions: *“Based on 222 airfields, by the end of 1941 it will be possible to place about 80 air regiments in the district at the rate of 2 airfields per regiment = 160 airfields and 62 airfields for maneuvering as spares. In order for the airfield network of the district to provide the aviation of the front, taking into account its strengthening in a future war, based on the instructions of the People's Commissar of Defense (closing speech on December 31, 1940 at a meeting of military workers), it is necessary to have 480 airfields in the district, of which 360 are for the location of air regiments (t .e.* 180 air regiments are planned in the district. - *M.S.) and 120 for maneuvering. To do*

this, it is necessary to build 258 airfields again in 1942 ... ” (198)

This is how the“ future war ”was expected. 180 air regiments (that is, about 11 thousand combat aircraft) in one district, and this district is not in the direction of the main attack! According to all the plans approved by that time, the main blow was to be delivered from the territory of the "Lvov ledge", and in the Kiev OVO only in 1941 it was planned to build 329 new airfields. To implement such a grandiose construction program, by a joint decree of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of March 24, 1941, the Main Directorate of Airfield Construction of the NKVD was created - who else, if not Comrade Beria and his myriad army of Gulag slaves, could be entrusted with such a " building of the century"? Comrade Beria justified the trust placed in him, and during 1941 only in the European

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Moscow, Orlovsky and Kharkov) 1560 new airfields were built. (197) Yes, in comparison with such figures, there were indeed “very few” airfields in the Western OVO. To complete the picture, it remains only to add that out of 1560 new airfields, 1515 went to the enemy, and almost all the airfields of the western border districts ended up in his hands. Prior to this, the Germans did not have such luxury
dreamed...

The airfield network is a very important, but by no means the only component of the material preparation of military aviation for combat operations. We also need ammunition, gasoline, tankers and autostarters, ground technicians, weather service and much more. Unfortunately (for the historian), information on these issues does not want to fit into a simple, one-color picture. Technical staff (aircraft technicians, engineers)

was. Four divisions (the 9th SAD, the 11th SAD, the 13th BAD and the 43rd IAD) were 100% equipped with it, the 10th SAD - by 90%, and only the 12th BAD - by 80%. (220) The situation with the provision of airfield equipment, at first

glance, is also quite favorable. In the 9th SAD (and this is the largest air division of the district), 100% of the norm was achieved only in the column "automotive gas tanks and trailers", in other categories the actual availability of equipment exceeds the standard norms. Things are not much worse in the other two air divisions of the "first echelon" of the District Air Force: (202)

Таблица 7

	9-я САД	10-я САД	11-я САД
Автостартеры	119	118	115
Компрессоры походные	180	100	100
Бензозаправщики	114	135	100
Бензоцистерны и прицепы	100	75	59
Водомаслозаправщики	127	111	100

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As you can see, for those components of the airfield equipment that mainly determine the speed of preparing aircraft for departure (starters, tankers), full security was achieved (and even surpassed) according to the staffing standards that existed in May 1941. Some shortage of mobile tankers is not so critical - it will manifest itself only after the ground aviation services move west following the victorious Red Army (however, the 3rd Army and the 11th SAD attached to it were not even going to move far according to plans).

The rosy picture begins to noticeably fade, as soon as we move from "percentage of compliance" to absolute numbers. There are exactly five autostarters per air regiment, and 40 - 50 - 60 serviceable aircraft per regiment. And this regiment is dispersed (may be dispersed, based on the actual availability of airfields and landing sites) at 3 - 4 - 5 airfields. In other words, there are no more than 1 - 2 autostarters available per airfield. And what to do after these two autostarters are destroyed by an enemy air raid?) There is an answer (more correctly, a lot

of answers) to such a question. On the I-16 there was an inertial starter with a manual drive (in other words, a heavy flywheel untwisted by a crank), on the MiG-3 and Yak-1 it was possible to start the engine from an onboard compressed air cylinder. Everything is not as hopeless as it seems (and as it will be written in the panic reports that await us below), but if autostarters were recognized as the necessary and most convenient “tool” for starting aircraft engines, then it is not clear what prevented them from being produced in large quantities and focus on border airfields. Even without rummaging through thick reference books, one can guess that a combat aircraft with a 1000-horsepower engine cost tens (and a bomber - hundreds) times more than a “jeep” with a rotating “mop” above the cockpit. As for the compressed air in the onboard cylinder

of a fighter aircraft, it does not appear by itself, it must be pumped in there. For this purpose, "marching compressors" were intended. In the 10th and 11th divisions there were exactly ONE of them per regiment, in the 9th GARDEN - 9 pieces per five regiments. And what to do after the failure of a single compressor? And to this question - if there is a desire and

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initiatives - you can find a practical answer: an AK-50 compressor driven by the main engine is installed on board the aircraft (both MiG-3 and Yak-1), and if the engine is started from an external source (the autostarter mentioned above), then the car will “pump itself up herself". Now, if both the starters and the “camping compressor” fail at the same time, then the situation will become hopeless - “inflate” a 50-atm cylinder with a bicycle pump. compressed air systems will fail.

Tankers are provided in the amount of 7 units per regiment, in fact there are a little more of them (38 units for 4 air regiments in the 10th SAD). At first glance - not so little; however, after the regiment is dispersed across operational airfields, the number of tankers on one airfield begins to approach a critically low level. Of course, it is possible to refuel an airplane from a bucket, but it is difficult, and most importantly, it takes a very long time, because. even in a light "seagull"

you need to fill in 320 liters of gasoline. 40 buckets... And here we return to the most important question: what kind of war was Stalin preparing for? For what kind of war did he prepare the Red Army and its air fleet? No, this is not at all about the terribly tired disputes about the “invariably peaceful foreign policy of the USSR” and the presence in the General Staff of the spacecraft, it’s scary to say, plans for a large-scale offensive operation. We are not talking about geopolitical, but about purely military categories: the intensity of hostilities, the expected level of combat tension, the level of casualties, enemy opposition ... How

did the Soviet headquarters see the future war? In the already repeatedly mentioned report “On the state of the district air force units as of May 15, 1941” there is a section entitled “Information about the need for ammunition and security for one month of war”, in which four figures appear, which fully justify the words of Comrade Karl Marx that “a few figures are sometimes worth more than volumes full of rhetorical nonsense.” The voltage rate for fighter, bomber, long-range (and heavy) bomber and assault regiments is indicated, respectively, in the amount of **30, 15, 10 and 24 departures per month.** (204) That's how they were going to fight. Slowly. With feeling, with sense, with arrangement. Each sortie is an event that does not happen every day in bomber units. But at the same time, the "approximate number of regiments" was expected to be 35 fighter, 55

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bomber (all types) and 2 assault; a total of 92 regiments, i.e. about 5.5 thousand aircraft. Three times more real.

Yes, this is it - the traditional Soviet (which also has very deep roots in the depths of Russian history) "extensive method of farming." A course towards the creation of huge, expensive, but at the same time inefficient monsters. In the same section of the report, it is noted that with the above standards of combat voltage, even to ensure the existing (and not tripled!) Number of air regiments, 4286 ammunition wagons per month will be required, and only 3480 wagons are available. (205) But that's not all - it's not a fact that the contents of these wagons were delivered directly to

air units.

The basis for such an assumption can be the "Certificate of the availability of ammunition in the ZapOVO Air Force units as of May 15, 1941 in regimental sorties." (209) Judging by the table given in the certificate, the planned norm was the presence in the bomber regiments of a supply of aerial bombs per ... 4 sorties! And what to do later if the enemy does not capitulate after four raids? Import ammunition from rear depots? Wouldn't it have been easier to do this even in peacetime, before the opposing enemy began to actively oppose such transportation? To tell the truth, the actual state of affairs was much “better” - on average, all the regiments of front-line bombers accumulated bombs not by 4, but by 8

regiment sorties.

All these (and many others like them) figures are presented in the report with stoic calm, without any disturbing comments. And what was there to worry about? Was anyone going to fight for a long time? *“On the 3rd day of the operation, seize Sedlec with moving parts and on the 5th day the crossings on the river. Vistula; the main forces on the 8th day to reach the river. The Vistula is ready to force it ... "* It was supposed to solve the" first strategic task "in 20-30 days. The first strategic task, as was indicated in all known versions of the Grand Plan, is "the defeat of the main forces of the German army." After this defeat becomes a reality, it will be possible to bring up the next thousand wagons with aviation ammunition without interference.

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The planned tension of combat operations (one sortie per day for fighters, one sortie per two days for front-line bombers) allows us to take a fresh look at the situation with the provision of aviation regiments with airfield equipment. What is the problem? Where are we hurrying? In two days it is possible to refuel all the planes of the bomber regiment with one tanker, and if the only compressor fails, then by the evening we will bring another one (it is also called “marching”) from the neighboring regiment. And the enemy will patiently wait - just as silently, with the same hopeless resignation to fate, with which Poland and Finland, Lithuania and Romania were waiting for Soviet attacks. Yes, it is impossible to believe in it, but the war against Germany seemed to Stalin's generals in the form of a brilliant "blitzkrieg", a short crushing blow to the "German booger". It’s better not to remember how this war was portrayed in novels (like “The First Strike” by N. Shpanov) and inspiring films (“Deep Raid”, “Squadron No. 5”).

Another touch to the picture of the “collective Stalin” ideas about a future war can be the anti-aircraft cover (i.e., its almost universal absence) of airfields. In the lengthy (one and a half hundred typewritten pages) Report of the Headquarters of the Air Force of the ZapOVO, this topic is not discussed at all; there is much more talk about starters, compressors, party political work and carts with cabs for the construction of airfields. At the same time, it should be noted right away that there were anti-aircraft weapons in the district, and by no means in single quantities: as of May 1, 1941, there were 784 medium-caliber anti-aircraft guns (76-mm and 85-mm) and 116 rapid-fire 37-mm guns. Between May 1 and June 22, PribOVO, ZapOVO and KOVO received another 414 anti-aircraft guns, and directly in the Western OVO the total number of anti-aircraft artillery guns (excluding anti-aircraft machine gun installations) reached 1052. Tales about the "lack of anti-aircraft shells" is also time I would have forgotten: on average, in the western military districts, one 76-mm anti-aircraft gun accounted for 1984 shots, and even for relatively new artillery systems (37-mm and 85-mm guns), 357 and 142 shots were

accumulated, respectively. (193) It would seem that even Stalin’s generals who were not trained in academies could understand that in a future war military airfields would inevitably become one of the objects of attack

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in the first days of hostilities - the first and most important object of the enemy's efforts. And if the fighter units can still (with some significant reservations) cover themselves, then bomber-based airfields without anti-aircraft cover turn into a defenseless training target. Nevertheless, [15] references to the presence of anti-aircraft weapons at airfields (even in the first echelon) are scattered throughout documents and memoirs, and their use for their intended purpose is remembered even less often.

As expected, the worst situation was with the provision of fuel to the Air Force of the future Western Front. If there was a lot of ammunition and anti-aircraft guns accumulated in the country, and even more were produced, and a very modest amount of them at the airfields was explained “only” by negligence and hatred of aviation gasoline in the frivolity That high octane country - the world leader in oil production - there was really little (more on this problem was said in the Chapter 1 of the first volume). On the eve of the war, the USSR produced more than 30 million tons of oil per year, of which only 65% went into processing (the rest of the oil was burned as heating oil or “stored”), and the production of gasoline (of all types and grades) was only 15% of the volume produced oil. The production facilities, technologies and equipment for the production of high-octane aviation gasoline were in their infancy, as a result, the mobilization stocks of aviation gasoline turned out to be less than 230 thousand tons, and the average monthly production was about

38 thousand tons. Aviation of the Western OVO was far from the only one in a long line of consumers (there were also the Air Forces of four western districts and two fleets, there was a large aviation group in the Far East, there were air defense fighter regiments of Moscow, Leningrad and Baku, there were hundreds of flight schools and colleges, there were aircraft engine factories , which spent a ton or more of gasoline on the "running" of each of the tens of thousands of engines), and according to the established standard, the Western OVO was supposed to have only 40 thousand tons of aviation gasoline (39,903, to

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only 18,665 tons. (206) This “norm” itself was calculated on the basis of the following assumptions: - in each air unit,

the supply of gasoline *“for current allowances”* at the rate of 3 refueling stations for fighters, 2 refueling stations for bombers; - emergency reserve in parts in the total (for

the entire district) in the amount of 9756 tons, which was 1.4 times more than the "current allowance";

- a supply of gasoline at operational airfields at the rate of 6 refueling stations of the fighter regiment and 3 refueling stations of the bomber regiment *"at each air hub" (judging* by the total amount, it was supposed to have 52 such "air hubs"). All this abundance

of figures boils down to the fact that even the “standard” (fulfilled by less than half) could provide the aviation of the district with gasoline for no more than two to three weeks of hostilities. From the point of view of our today's "after-knowledge" - this is catastrophically small, from the point of view of peppy pre-war plans and ideas about a future war - it fully corresponds to the criterion of "reasonable sufficiency". For a somewhat more balanced assessment of the situation, however,

it is worth “tweaking up the sharpness” and looking closely at the figures for the planned consumption of gasoline. First, it should be immediately noted that “refueling” is a calculated supply category, and not an operational category at all. Refueling is the weight of fuel in the geometric volume of the internal (excluding the possible use of outboard) gas tanks of the aircraft. And if for a fighter "refueling" and the actual consumption of gasoline for one sortie, as a rule, coincide (it is difficult to imagine a combat mission for which a fighter would take off with incomplete tanks), then in bomber aircraft, a combat sortie does not always become a flight to the maximum range; quite common is the case when it is tactically more profitable to take the maximum possible bomb load at the cost of a significant reduction in fuel weight and flight range.

Secondly, the plane is different for the plane, and if the weight of the refueling of fighters of different types was expressed in comparable numbers (250 kg for the I-153, 270 kg for the I-16, 305 kg for the Yak-1, 463 kg for the MiG-3 with

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additional fuselage tank), then the weight of refueling light SB and heavy TB-3 differed by an order of magnitude (945 and 9416 kg, respectively). (207) As a result, the refueling of one regiment of voracious heavy bombers (361.3 tons) was one and a half times the total weight of the refueling of all 12 fighter regiments of the district! In general, the refueling of the 3rd DBAK (four long-range and two heavy bomber regiments) turned out to be exactly equal to the weight of the refueling of all other air units of the district, including flight schools, reserve and reconnaissance regiments, and corps squadrons. In the real situation that arose at dawn on June 22, 1941, long-range bombing raids on Berlin and Hamburg were hardly an expedient exercise, and the actual consumption of gasoline in the 3rd DBAK could and should have been significantly less than theoretical "refuellings" .

If you approach the matter of spending aviation gasoline extremely hard and sparingly, i.e. to leave only fighter, assault, reconnaissance and front-line bomber (flying on SB, Ar-2, Pe-2 and Su-2) regiments among consumers, then the 18.7 thousand tons of gasoline available in the district could theoretically be enough for about two weeks of combat operations with the stress of 2 sorties per day for fighters and attack aircraft, 1 sortie per day for bombers and reconnaissance aircraft. And this is without taking into account losses, which inevitably reduce the number of "gasoline consumers", and on the assumption that each regiment has a complete set of serviceable aircraft; in other words, in reality, gasoline could be enough for a much longer period. Now let's move on to the

most important issue in our study about the availability of gasoline in the air divisions of the "first echelon" of the Air Force of the Western OVO. Was the lack of fuel the reason for such a rapid defeat of these formations? The amount of gasoline stored at the airfields of these divisions (and without taking into account those stocks that the compilers of the May 15 report classified as "available at operational airfields"; this gives an error of about 22%) is known. (208) We will make an approximate calculation of the need for aviation gasoline under the following assumptions: - all available aircraft are

considered serviceable and combat-ready; – losses are equal to zero;

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- fighters refuel on a full tank; – bombers are refueled

with two thirds of the maximum fuel weight [16]; - gasoline consumption for SB, Ar-2, Pe-2 bombers

is adopted

the same;

- the daily voltage is two sorties a day for fighters and attack aircraft, one sortie a day for bombers. Obviously, the required fuel consumption calculated under such conditions will be

somewhat overestimated. The results are presented in the following table:

Таблица 8

	9-я САД	10-я САД	11-я САД
Самолеты	235 МиГ-3, 73 И-16, 52 И-153, 59 бомб.	44 И-16, 121 И-153, 48 бомб.	69 И-16, 70 И-153, 60 бомб.
Расход бензина в день, тонн	319	115	109
Наличие бензина в частях	2,263	1,453	1,371
Число дней боевой работы	7	13	13

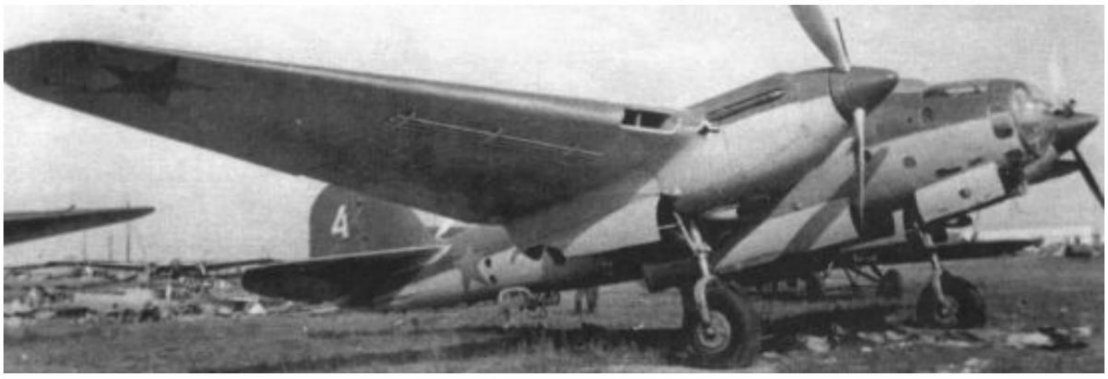
Despite all the conventions and inaccuracies of the calculation, it gives a very clear answer to the above question: no, it was not the lack of fuel that caused the rapid (which took no more than 1-2 days) defeat of the 9th, 10th, 11th air divisions. No matter how small ("small" from the point of view of our current knowledge of how much tension, how many sorties the war in the air required) the fuel reserves in parts were, the planes and pilots disappeared much earlier than all the available aviation gasoline could be used up.

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2.3. 30-year-old general and his division

Strictly speaking, Major General Sergei Alexandrovich Chernykh did not live to see his 30th birthday for three months and one week - he was shot on October 16, 1941. He became a general on June 4, 1940, and Lieutenant Chernykh was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union in incomplete 25 years. Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Armed Forces of December 31, 1936, Gold Star of the Hero number 21. Awarded for courage and heroism shown in air battles in the sky over Madrid. This young fighter pilot, who had turned from a lieutenant into a general in four years, met the beginning of the war as commander

of the 9th SAD of the Western OVO. The division was not easy - the largest in the Soviet Air Force (four fighter and one bomber regiment, 416 pilots), which received the largest number of "new types of fighters" (235 MiG-3) before the start of the war. The division's bomber regiment (13th BAP) was one of the first in the Soviet Air Force to begin re-equipping with dive bombers - first Ar-2, and then Pe-2 (by the beginning of the war, the regiment had 22 Ar-2 and 8 Pe-2), to At the beginning of the war, 40 crews flew independently on the Ar-2. (223) And the base area of this division was not easy - on the tip of the "Bialystok ledge", and it turned out to be one of two (along with the 10th SAD) divisions in the Air Force of the western districts, whose fighter regiments were really located no further than 50 km from the border (and the operational airfield of the 129th IAP in Tarnovo, 12 km from the border, could have been fired at by enemy artillery).



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Soviet dive bomber Ar-2

The elite (in today's language) status of the division, apparently, did not have the best effect on commanders and pilots. *“Excessive self-confidence among the flight crew, overestimation of the strength of the pilots by the leadership, the lack of daily exactingness in the strict implementation of the Instructions, Charters and orders ... The headquarters is knocked together, it can manage, teach and lead units. There is some arrogance ”* - this is how in May 1941 the compilers of the report of the headquarters of the Air Force of the Western OVO

assessed the state of affairs in the 9th SAD. (210) But there was nothing to be arrogant about. For four months (from January to April 41 inclusive), the total flight time in the division was 4335 hours, which gives only 12 hours per crew (in fact, even less, since in addition to 352 "flying independently" there were 64 more young pilots which were commissioned). Even if we completely exclude three cold, snowy months (January, February, March) and attribute the entire raid to April, which is quite warm in Eastern Poland, then even then the numbers are not impressive. Things were even worse with the actual combat training. If you believe the report mentioned above, four fighter regiments conducted a total of 68 training air battles and 431 aerial fire in four months (that is, an average of 1.3 fire per pilot). (211) In the column

"bombing" for the 9th SAD there is a stunning dash. It is not surprising that with such a “sparing regime” of flight training in the division, 51 flight accidents occurred in four months, one of which ended in a disaster (i.e., the death of the aircraft and the pilot); There is a well-known rule in aviation: they fly a little - they break a lot. The new MiG-3 fighters, which began to enter the division back in January, were not properly mastered by either the flight or technical staff until June 22[17] Both the pre-war report and the “explanatory notes” drawn up after the defeat of the division contain complaints that that the armament of the MiGs is not properly adjusted and the machine guns give numerous delays when firing. Of the 226 pilots *"flying independently on the MiG-3",* they were considered combat-ready (accord

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report) only 76 people - it is noteworthy that in the May report there were 100 of them, and May was followed by another 20 days of June ... (212)

With such a level of flight and gunnery training for the crews, 235 of the latest, only from the factory, fighters (two full-fledged fighter squadrons by the standards of the Luftwaffe) were of very dubious combat value. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the donkeys that remained in the regiments in a significant number were badly worn out. On May 15, 1941, the division had 84 I-16s, of which 67 were morally and physically obsolete modifications with the M-25 engine (veterans of the Spanish war), the proportion of serviceable ones among which did not exceed 50%. Only the 129th IAP (the one that met the beginning of the war at the Tarnovo airfield near the border), which included 52 I-153s in good technical condition, could be considered fully equipped with "old-type fighters". (203) On May 17, 1941, an order was issued, according to which *“in order to bring the combat work of*

the units closer to combat conditions in the summer period and in connection with the deployment of construction at stationary airfields, the district Air Force units from the second half of May are moving to operational airfields in the area divisions." (213) In particular, in the 9th SAD, the "oldest" and most experienced fighter regiment (41st IAP) was relocated from Bialystok to the Seburchin airfield, the 124th IAP - from Bialystok to the airfields of Vysokie-Mazovetsk, Pyatkovo, Vyliny-Rus , 126th IAP - from Velsk to the airfields of Rudka, Dolubovo, 129th IAP - from Zabludovo to the airfields of Tarnovo, Lomzha. The division's bomber regiment (also "old", which took part in the Finnish war) flew from the Ross airfield to Borisovshchizna (see Map No. 4). The 13 airfields listed above did not at all exhaust the entire airfield network of the 9th SAD. *“There are 26 airfields in the area of the division, of which: 4 permanent, 11 operational, in addition, 11 operational airfields require expansion. Runways* [concrete] *are being built on 4 permanent and 6 operational airfields ... By 11/1/41, there will be 4 permanent and 61 operational airfields in the division area.* (214)

If you look at the map, it becomes quite clear - for the solution of what task the most powerful (in theory) air division of the district ended up where it was caught by an unexpected enemy strike *(“On the 3rd*

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on the day of the operation, take possession of Sedlec with moving parts and on the 5th day of crossings on the river. Vistula ... In the future, keep in mind actions on Radom ... To ensure the main blow of the front, deliver an auxiliary blow in the direction of Bialystok - Warsaw"). In the Bialystok area, the 6th mechanized corps was deployed (the most powerful not only among the mechanized corps of the Western OVO, but throughout the Red Army), in the Velsk area - the 13th MK. It was their offensive that the fighters of the 9th SAD had to cover from the air. For the Germans, the strip in which the 9th GARDEN was located was just a passive section of the front, on which several Wehrmacht divisions were supposed to tie down the main

grouping of Soviet troops with their distracting actions. Accordingly, the Luftwaffe air groups were distributed accordingly. The 2nd Air Corps with its main forces was supposed to support the breakthrough of Guderian's tanks through Brest, Kobrin to Baranovichi; it is there that the StG-77 squadron dive bombers and Mölders fighters (JG-51 squadron) will operate. The Germans could not divert significant resources from solving the main task, and to strike at the airfields of the 9th SAD, they actually had only “horizontal” bombers of the KG-3 squadrons (Demblin airfield), KG-53 (Radzyn, Radom and Gruets airfields) and multi-purpose Me-110s from the SKG-210 squadron (Radzyn, Rogoz

The revealed documents still do not allow a reliable and complete reconstruction of the events of the last pre-war days. Strictly speaking, only the report of the head of the 3rd department (military counterintelligence) of the 10th army of the Western OVO, compiled on July 13, 1941, can be attributed to the category of operational documents, i.e. after the destruction that took place. The report says that *"the 9th air division, stationed in Bialystok, received orders to be on alert from the 20th to the 21st." (215)* And this is not a typo - that's right, from June 20

to 21. It is noteworthy that the same date, June 20, also appears in the memoirs of the commander of the 10th SAD, Colonel Belov: *“On June 20, I received a telegram with an order from the commander of the district air force to put the units on combat readiness, forbid vacations for command personnel, and recall those on vacation in part ... " (216)* H

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a strange thing happens later - Belov claims that at 16.00 on June 21 he received a new encryption from the district headquarters, in which the order of June 20 to put the units on alert and prohibit vacations was allegedly canceled!

Traces of such a strange order are also found in the memoirs of Lieutenant Colonel Tsupko (before the war - a bomber pilot in the 13th BAP of the 9th SAD); he writes that *“on Sunday, June 22, a day off was announced in the 13th air regiment, everyone was delighted - they didn’t rest for three months.”* Further - even "more interesting", according to the narrator, *"on the eve of the anti-aircraft battery was removed from the position and left for the exercises." (217)* But in the memoirs of Lieutenant Colonel Rulin (on the eve of the war - political officer of the 129th IAP of the 9th SAD), there are no traces of Saturday relaxation, rather the opposite: “On June 21, the entire leadership of the regiment was called to Bialystok . *In connection with the beginning of the exercise in the border military districts, it was proposed to disperse all the materiel available in the regiment before dark, to ensure its camouflage. When at the end of the day the regiment commander returned from the meeting to the camp, the work began to boil. All the*

planes at the airfield were dispersed and camouflaged ... " (218) Something between an operational document and a heroic legend is the contents of an album called "The History of the 126th Fighter Aviation Regiment." This story was signed on April 25, 1942 by the regiment commander, Major Naidenko, the style of presentation is sometimes like this: *“Individual stars shine through the breaks in the clouds. The air is clean, damp, saturated with vapors of recent rain. A small group of people gathered under the plane of one of the planes, this is the flight crew of the squadron of senior lieutenant Arsenin ... ”* Nevertheless, for lack of a better one, this album should also be carefully studied. The last pre-war days are described as follows:

“The treacherous attack of the German fascists on our socialist Motherland found the personnel of the regiment in intense combat training in a camp situation at the Dolubovo airfield (18 km from the state border, Western Belarus). The proximity of the airfield to the border and the tense international situation kept the flight crew of the regiment in full combat readiness every

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minute. The command of the regiment carried out a number of measures to enhance combat readiness, such as: the dispersal of materiel throughout the airfield was made, a telephone connection was established from the command post of the regiment with squadron commanders, slots were dug near aircraft parking and [places] of concentration of personnel ... " (219)

The infamous Directive No. 1 (the one where, instead of a simple and clear order to put the district cover plans into action, it was proposed to “not succumb to provocative actions” and at the same time “be in full combat readiness to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans”) entered the headquarters Western OVO at one in the morning (according to other documents - at 1.45). June 22 and in the period from 2 to 2.30 transferred to the headquarters of the armies (no one in the high headquarters slept that ill-fated night). (221) It is worth noting one important detail that has not received a clear explanation to this day: the headquarters (it’s hard to even say what headquarters: the district or already the front?) was still in Minsk - while the headquarters of the North-Western and South-Western fronts were have already been deployed (or were in the process of being deployed) to field command posts, respectively, in the vicinity of Panevezys and Tarnopol; for the Western Front, a field command post was being prepared at the Obus-Lesna station (in the Baranovichi region), but the front headquarters and the front air force headquarters never got there [18] — .

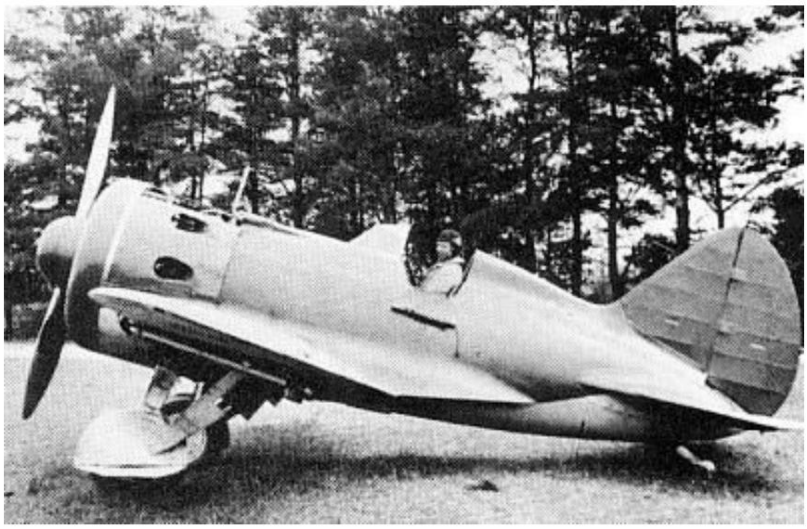
From the testimony given during the investigation by the commander of the Western Front D. G. Pavlov, who was arrested on July 4, 1941, it follows that at 2 am on June 22 “Kopets *(major* general, commander of the district air force. - *M.S.) and his Deputy Tayursky reported to me that aviation was fully put on alert and dispersed at airfields in accordance with the order of the People's Commissar of Defense ... ” (222)* Messages similar in time are also found in memoirs. So, the commander of the 10th SAD, Colonel Belov, mentioned above, writes: *“At about 2 am on June 22, I give the “Combat Alert” signal. It is transmitted by telephone, duplicated by radio. A few minutes later, confirmation was received from three regiments of receipt*

signal and its execution ... "

The memoirs of V. I. Olimpiyev deserve special attention. In June of the 41st, Sergeant Olimpiyev served as the commander of the telephonist section of the headquarters of the 9th SAD, and therefore, despite such a modest rank, he saw and knew quite a lot; it is also worth noting that

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his education (he was drafted into the army after the first year of the Leningrad Shipbuilding Institute), the sergeant was much superior to his division commander. The description of the first hours of June 22 in Olimpiyev's memoirs is quite standard: *"Having returned from duty to the barracks late in the evening of June 21, 1941, with a leave of absence for Sunday in my pocket, I was already dozing when, through a dream, I heard a loud command "to the gun." He glanced at his watch, it was about two in the morning. The combat alert did not surprise us, since the next military exercises were expected ... It was almost dawn when our special truck, designed for unwinding and winding the cable, reached the military airfield on the outskirts of the city. Everything was quiet. Disguised in caponiers along the airfield, 37-mm anti-aircraft guns were striking* (this, unfortunately, is not so "standard." - *M.S.), armed with carbines, the calculations of which were in helmets ... "* A few minutes after that, the war began .



Soviet fighter I-16

The archive file "Operational reports of the headquarters of the 9th SAD" (TsAMO, f. 208, op. 2589, file 59) contains only 27 pages. As the first "operational report" there is a piece of brown paper on which it is written in black pencil: *"Bialystok - all airfields are bombed - 16 destroyed - bombed in groups from 5 to 55 - position."* Signature - Nazarov (colonel, chief of staff of the 9th SAD). The origin of the leaflet is not entirely clear - above the text is written in red pencil: "From Bialystok", and under the text

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the inscription in the same black pencil: "Druskeniki". (224) Most likely, this is a record of a message transmitted “in a roundabout way” from Bialystok through some communication center (or headquarters) in Druskeniki (now Druskininkai, Lithuania) to the Front Air Force headquarters

in Minsk. It is even more difficult to unambiguously decipher the words "destroyed 16". The 9th SAD did not have a regiment with that number; there was the 13th BAP (which really ceased to exist in the very first hours of the war), and the 11th SAD included the 16th BAP, based at the Cherlena airfield 15 km from the base airfield of the 13th BAP and defeated at the same pace (All this will be discussed later). The only thing that can be said with certainty is that there could not be 55 German aircraft in one raid, because it could never be. As a rule, no more than one squadron (staffel) participated in a raid on one object, which, even when fully equipped with serviceable combat vehicles (how things were with this in the 2nd Luftwaffe Air Fleet, noted above) gives 12 aircraft. Theoretically, it is not excluded (although I do not know of a single such case, documented) the possibility of participating in a raid on one object of the entire air group, but as part of the 2nd V.f. not a single group (even a fighter, even a bomber) had more than 38 serviceable

aircraft.

The next page of Case No. 59 is a piece of gray paper half the size of a standard A4 (probably a telegraph form), on which is written in black pencil: *“From Bialystok. Commander of the Air Force. The fighters are all destroyed. I ask for help. Chernykh.* The message transmission time is 10 hours 31 minutes. (225) Taking into account how many fighters were in the 9th SAD and how many hours have passed since the start of hostilities, one could doubt not only the reliability of the division commander’s message, but also the authenticity of the gray leaf itself. However, by a happy coincidence, I managed to find in the archive fund of captured documents (TsAMO, f. 500, op. 12462) a translation of the intelligence report of the headquarters of the 2nd Air Force Luftwaffe, where it is noted that on June 22 at 9.31 (Berlin time) the transmitted in plain text (!) to the headquarters of the Air Force of the Western Front, a radiogram from the commander of the 9th SAD with the following content: *“All*

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fighters are destroyed. Please help. Chernykh.” (226) As you can see, even after two translations (from Russian into German and from German into Russian), the phrase was preserved exactly, the time of transmission of the panic radiogram coincides up to a minute.

Page 3 is missing in the File, it disappeared without a trace, about which the archive workers made a corresponding entry on 10/16/1951. On page 4, the last (from the surviving) report of the commander of the 9th SAD, sent from Bialystok, is written in black pencil: *“15.45, 22.6. Commander*

of the Air Force of the Western Front. General Boldin

(deputy commander of the Western front. - *M.S.) we accept, landing within the restrictions of Bialystok.*

The enemy has an advantage in the direction of Bialystok 7 -

8. In the direction of Lomza, artillery preparation of the enemy.

Chernykh".

(227) The next report (this time written in red pencil on a piece of paper in a box from a school notebook) was drawn up three days later, on the evening of June 25th. By this time, the Hero of the Soviet Union, Major General Chernykh, with the remnants of the headquarters of his division, moved from Bialystok to Mogilev - a swift throw for 450 km. You can't walk that much in three days. Judging by the memoirs of Olimpiyev, *“at the end of the day, all aviation units received an order to immediately leave the city and go to the east ... late in the evening of June 22, a long column of cars left Bialystok and was already far outside the city on Monday morning ... ".* Having reached Mogilev, General Chernykh and Colonel Nazarov sign the above-mentioned sheet in the box, which says: *"Our losses in air battles are no more than 5 aircraft [19] All the rest were burned at the airfields." (228)* By whom burned - not — .

said.

No other documents of the headquarters of the 9th SAD describing the events of the first days of the war could be found. The available documents of the headquarters of the air force of the front will help us a little. Operational report No. 01, compiled by 12.00 on June 22, reports only the following:

"1. Air Force ZapOVO units were brought to combat readiness No. 2 [k] *4.00 22.6.41. Regiments 9, 10.11 SAD from that time began hostilities*

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[to] *repel enemy air attacks and are used according to the plan of the army air force commanders ...*

4, 9 and 10 SAD - wired communication is broken, they are connected only [by] *radio. There is no information about the state of the units and the specific combat missions they perform according to the plan of the army air force commanders ... " (229)*

Nevertheless, even from this "lack of information" it follows that by noon on June 22, the radiogram "All fighters are destroyed", received even by the enemy, either did not reach the front's air force headquarters, or was ignored there (considered unreliable). Opersvodka No. 02 of the headquarters of the Air Force of the front - by the way, still calling itself "ZapOVO" - was compiled by 20.00 on June 22 (its transmission by telegraph was completed at 0.15 on June 23). It already categorically states the following: *“9 SAD. The entire material part of 41, 124, 126, 129 IAP was destroyed by the enemy at the airfields of Seburchin, Mazovetsk, Tarnovo, Dolubovo. I have no information about the*

losses of personnel ... ” (230) So, we have a document, a real, primary, **ARCHIVAL** document, confirming the traditional version of Soviet historiography - and to be precise, surpassing it in terms of quantitative assessment of the damage caused by the enemy. However, it is too early to draw a line under the discussion. The fact is that the first words on the telegraph tape of Opersvodka No. 02 are the following words: *“I am transmitting operas. report, but incomplete, since I have no connection with three air divisions and have not yet been able to get operational reports from them, ”* and the phrase *“ I have no information about the losses of personnel ”* continues: *“ the absence of any connection with 9 SAD from 9.30 " .* Those. there is a document, but the words written in it reflect nothing more than assumptions, the guesses of the deputy head of the operational department of the headquarters of the air force of the front, Major Beskaravayny, about what the death

Now let's turn to the operational documents of the air regiments that were part of the 9th SAD. At first glance, the chances of finding something are negligible - what documents could remain from the regiments defeated in the very first hours of the war? The fund of the 9th air division itself (TsAMO, f. 20048A, op. 2) contains the only “Regular-duty book of officers and sergeants

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composition". The reports cited above, written in pencil on scraps of paper, have been preserved in the archival fund of a higher authority - the headquarters of the Air Force of the Western Front. Nevertheless, documents, and not in the singular, exist. There are also published memoirs of eyewitnesses and participants in the events. Let's start with the

above-mentioned "History of the 126th IAP". The events of the first day of the war are described there as follows:

"The first sudden attack by enemy aircraft on the Dolubovo airfield was not successful. On June 22, 1541, at 8:15 a.m. (i.e., 4 hours after the start of hostilities at the border, from which the airfield was only 18 km away. - *M.S.) at an altitude of 800 m, 5 km north of the Dolubovo airfield, 23 Yu-88 aircraft heading east. The nine MiG-3 aircraft that took off under the command of the deputy commander of the 4th squadron, Lieutenant G. I. Alaev, entered into an air battle with a group of enemy bombers. As a result of the air battle, 2 Yu-88 aircraft were shot down and fell in the airfield area, the rest of the enemy aircraft were dispersed, there were no losses. 10 minutes after the air battle with the*

bombers, 10 Me-109 aircraft and 9 Me-110 aircraft appeared in the airfield area. The Me-110 planes began to attack the airfield, and the Me-109 planes started an air battle with our MiG-3 planes covering the airfield. As a result of air combat, one Me-109 was shot down and crashed near the airfield. The flight commander, junior lieutenant Panfilov, conducting an air battle at an altitude of 600 m with two Me-109s, chopped off the tail of his Me-109 with the screw of his fighter and, being set on fire by the second Me-109, left the plane and jumped out with a parachute (6th Squadron JG- 51 at 7.26 / 7.35 Berlin time, she fought an air battle with Soviet fighters, after which she claimed 3 shot down I-18s (as the Germans called Migi in the early days of the war) without their own losses - M.S.) . *Landed safely in the area of Botski. The unexpected attack of fascist aviation caused a number of difficulties*

in the regiment's combat work, communication with the higher command and with the outside world was interrupted, the enemy undertook furious continuous assaults on the airfield.

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Despite this, the personnel showed restraint, stability and the desire to repulse the presumptuous fascists. On the radio, a military technician of the 2nd rank Nikulin V. Ya., seeing that the 1st number of the calculation of the anti-aircraft machine gun was disabled, he himself stood at the machine gun and fired until the fascist "aces" left; the Me-109 plane he shot down fell 500 m from the anti-aircraft point.

The deputy commander of the 4th squadron, Lieutenant Alaev G. I., during the attack on the airfield by enemy aircraft, started an unequal air battle with 5 enemy aircraft at an altitude of 150 - 200 m and, having a low altitude, hooked the left plane on the building, died a fearless fighter in an air battle ". (231)

And this is all that can be found in the History of the 126th IAP. The next paragraph already contains the final figures (the number of sorties, air battles, enemy aircraft shot down) for the period from June 22 to September 13, 1941. About how and how the day of June 22 ended for the regiment, where and how the day of June 23 began, - Not a word was said. It is categorically impossible to combine this archival document with the archival document about “all fighters were destroyed” - the loss of two “flashlights” mentioned in the “History” (out of 50, not counting 23 worn “donkeys”) to explain the reason for the loss of all combat materiel of the regiment doesn't pull...

From the 129th IAP, a more serious document has been preserved than the "history". A difficult and glorious fate awaited this air unit - after the defeat and loss of all aircraft, the personnel were withdrawn to the rear, then the regiment fought in the sky over Moscow, one of the first to receive the rank of Guards and ended the war as the 5th Guards Berlin twice decorated, and in terms of the number of downed (declared) enemy aircraft, he entered the top ten fighter regiments of the Soviet Air Force. But all this will be later, for now let's turn to the first two pages of the Journal of Combat Actions of the 129th IAP.

In the summer of 1941, documents with this name were often drawn up retrospectively, and sometimes by other commanders (who replaced their dead or shot predecessors). The 129th IAP also occupies a special place in this sense - the regiment's railway line was clearly drawn up in hot pursuit of events. So:

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"22.6.41

Combat mission: Covering the Tarnovo airfield from aircraft enemy.

Departure time: 04.05

Action time: 04.08 (let me remind you that the airfield was 12 km from the border. - *M.S.).*

Landing time: (not specified. - *M.S.).*

Enemy actions: Bombing raid on the city of Lomza. The results of the combat mission: 2 enemy aircraft of the Me-109 type were shot down, one aircraft was shot down by junior lieutenant Tsebenko and one was shot down by senior political instructor Sokolov. 4,000 ShKAS rounds and 1,500 BS rounds were used up (i.e., about 5 full rounds of ammunition for the Miga fighter. - *M.S.). A total of 74 sorties were completed. Own losses: 1 MiG-3 did not return from a combat mission, 1 shot down in air combat ... "*

That's all about "the longest day of the year." Almost all. In the place where I put the ellipsis, there are two more numbers: 27 MiG-3 and 11 I-153 lost on the ground! When and under what circumstances they were lost is not known; about any "actions of the enemy", except for the raid on Lomzha noted above, not a word is said in the ZhBD. Non-stop enemy air raids on the Tarnovo airfield, one after another, will appear later, in post-war memoirs. On the other hand, the regiment's railroad division contains a report on the events of the next day: *"June 23, 1941. Combat mission: Covering the Dobzhenovka airfields* (near the Zabludovo airfield. - *M.S.), Kuryany, Kvatery, Baranovichi* (the last point 175 km east of Bialystok. - *M.S.). Departure time:* (not specified. - *M.S.). Time of action:* (not specified. - *M.S.). Landing time:* (not specified. - *M.S.). Enemy actions: Assault raid on the airfields of Kvater, Baranovichi. The results of the combat mission: 4 air battles were carried out over the airfields of Kvater, Baranovichi. 5000 ShKLS rounds and 2500 BS rounds were used up. A total of 53 sorties were completed.*

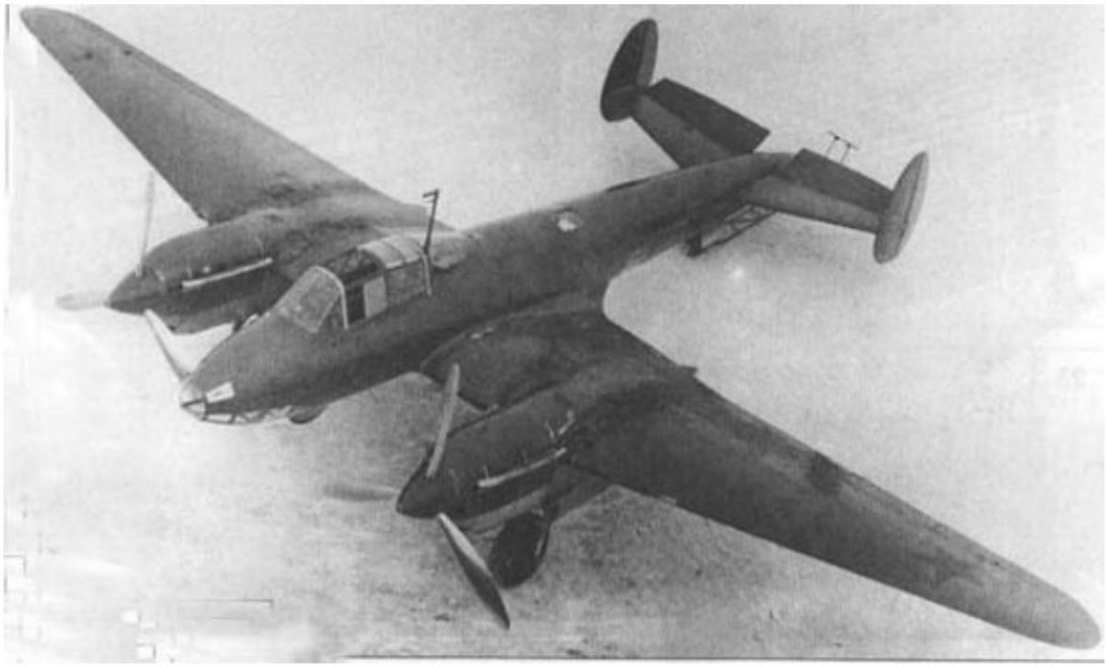
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Own losses: 23 MiG-3s, 21 I-153s, 8 training ones were destroyed on the ground.

(232) Even if these staggering numbers of ground losses are not questioned, we have to state that by the end of the day on June 23, “all fighters” of the 129th IAP were not destroyed - the arithmetic remainder should have been 5 MiG-3 and 20 I-153 [20] . Another one or two months will pass, and 25 fighters in one regiment will be regarded in the Soviet Air Force as an unheard of luxury (the staffing will be reduced to 20 units), but in June 41, apparently, they don’t think so. The next (after June 23) entry in the ZhBD of the 129th IAP appears only ... on July 5! The regiment, located on that day, no one knows where, carried out 8 sorties in the period from 7.33 to 8.20, 200 cartridges for the ShKAS machine gun were used up. Then - another break in the records, for a whole 10 days.

On July 15, the regiment covers the Oryol airfield; 10 sorties were made, *"there were no meetings with the enemy."* This is understandable - in mid-July 1941, the Luftwaffe had other concerns than raids on Oryol located in the rear. The first (after June) mention of an air battle with enemy aircraft appears in the ZhBD of the 129th IAP only on July 28. The last entry in the ZhBD is dated January 25, 1942. By that time, the regiment had already become guards, on the last page of the document the signature of the chief of staff of the 5th GvIAP, Major Rusanov. The most interesting thing, in my opinion, is what is not in the document. And there is not a single mention in it of at least one aircraft lost on the ground after June 23! Apparently, the Germans dropped and lost forever the "magic wand", with which they destroyed 82 aircraft of the 129th IAP on the ground in the first two days of the war.

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Soviet dive bomber Pe-2

As expected, in the memoirs published in the Soviet years, the strange story of the defeat of the 129th IAP looks almost like a heroic saga: “ ... *The*

Nazis, with a special pedantry characteristic of the Germans, at regular intervals inflicted one bomb attack after another on the airfield. Probably, they decided to wipe him off the face of the earth, to destroy everything to the last machine, to the last person. Our pilots lifted their cars into the air under the fire of enemy aircraft. The raids followed at an increasing pace. The regimental commander gathered the pilots and said:

- The situation is difficult. There is no communication with the division, compressed air is running out, and the compressor is broken. A decision was made: to withdraw the regiment from the attack. We will fly to another airfield, I will drive the MiGs myself, the Seagulls - the regimental commissar ...

He paused, words were difficult for him. And in complete silence he

added: - It is necessary to select a team to destroy everything remaining: bomb ammunition, shells, cartridges and fuel.

Berkal (Captain Yu. M. Berkal, commander of the 129th IAP) *made the only possible decision in the current situation, but how hard it is to realize that it is the only one. Yes, we didn't imagine*

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even before the end of the exorbitant severity of the war. Everyone wanted to quickly sit at the helm of a combat vehicle and beat, beat the Nazis (what were they going to “beat” them with, leaving combat vehicles at the airfield, destroying ammunition and fuel? - *M.S.). In the meantime, using the pause between enemy raids, squadron commanders quickly distributed the remaining aircraft among the pilots. Two groups - first "seagulls", then "migi" - flew to the Dobzhenovka airfield, located just a few kilometers from the permanent base of the regiment in Zabluduvo. There, in winter quarters,* ***the families of personnel were accommodated*** (this important circumstance is

habitually overlooked by everyone. - *M.S.). Pilots took off from the new airfield to cover the city of Bialystok and its railway junction* (about which there is not a word in the railway regiment. - *M.S.). A messenger arrived from the divisional headquarters. He gave the regiment commander an order: before dark, all planes fly to the Kvater ⋯ airfield* (65 km east of Bialystok. - *M.S.). The day was dying reluctantly. The sun, hidden behind*

the horizon, burned with a bloody glow in the west for a long time ... " Further, in order to make the decision on the second redeployment within one day more decent, an action-packed story begins about how *" German tanks and motorized infantry were already rushing to the Dobzhenovka airfield ... next to the airfield there was an oncoming night battle, flashes of fire approached the airfield, surrounded it with a ring.* It is absolutely impossible to understand who fought with whom in the late evening of June 22 in the Bialystok, Zabludovo region; there were no

tanks or motorized infantry in those places at all, while the usual Wehrmacht infantry approached Bialystok only on June 25th. *“And at the airfield, Kvaters were preparing for combat sorties ... All the planes that survived the day flew to the Bialystok and Grodno directions, mainly from border airfields, to the airfield. The cars quieted down, the voices of tired people fell silent. Calm has come. And suddenly, the roar of other people's motors was heard in the air. A moment passed. From the ground it was visible how two groups of Me-110s dived at the airfield at steep angles from two sides. They dropped bombs, then began to water the airfield with machine-gun bursts. Quaters blazed. The bombing*

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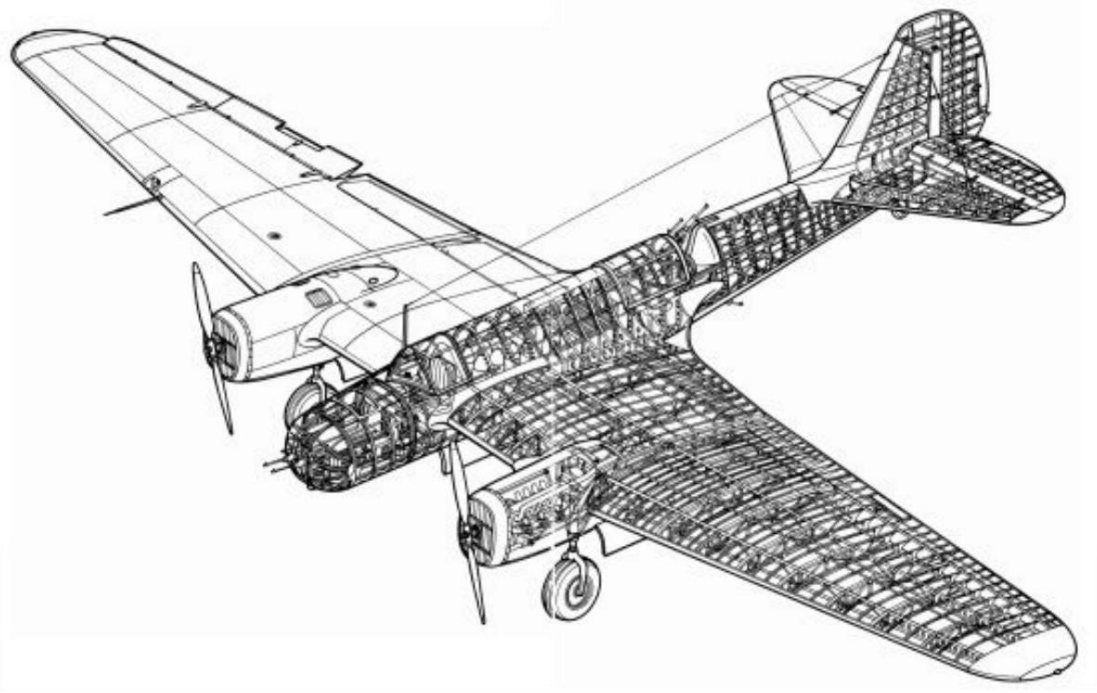
especially tangible silence (is this the very episode that is described in the ZhBD as “4 air battles were carried out over the airfields of Kvater, Baranovichi. 5000 ShKAS cartridges and 2500 BS cartridges were used up”?). *A light breeze cleaned the airfield from raised dust, dispersed the fumes.*

Berkal gave the order to prepare MiGs for flight. They poured gasoline from the tanks of faulty cars, rearranged the onboard cylinders with compressed air to start the engines. Five "migs" were transferred to the Baranovichi airfield (260 km east of Tarnovo. - *M.S.), also clogged with aircraft, mainly I-16 and I-15bis fighters ... We must show restraint and discipline, move to the rear and save people ... " (218)*

On this good note, on the decision to “save people”, giving the enemy 100 miles of desert that is by no means deserted a day, we will finish our obviously incomplete story about the events of June 22 in the 129th IAP and move on to the history of the largest in the 9th th GARDEN (if not all the Red Army Air Forces) of the fighter regiment - the 124th IAP. The regiment had 85 pilots, including 64 self-flying MiGs, 70 MiG-3 fighters and 29 I-16s.

The archive fund of the 124th IAP contains a document with the title: "Operation report No. 01 by 12.00 22.6.41, headquarters of the 124th air regiment, Vysokie Mazowieck." As has already been shown in the preface to the first volume of this book, in fact, Opersvodka No. 01 was compiled retrospectively, presumably on July 1, 1941, and it was written in the city of Oryol. In fact, we have an “explanatory note” in which the command of the regiment tried to describe those “force majeure circumstances” due to which it was without aircraft and 950 km from the pre-war base airfield. Nevertheless, even this very specific document completely overturns the version of a “sudden annihilating strike” by German aviation.

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Soviet SB bomber

Here is the full text of Operational Report No. 01, from the first to the last letter:

"First: *During 22.6.41, the Regiment made three sorties consisting of 48 MiG-3 aircraft to destroy enemy aircraft. The first*

sortie was made on alert at 4.30 in the composition of 28 MiG-3. There was no air combat, with the exception of ml. Lieutenant Kokarev, who shot down one Me-110. At 05.25, one

Yu-88 aircraft flew over the airfield at an altitude of 800 m, followed by a raid by two enemy Me 109 aircraft, as a result of the ensuing battle between our aircraft and enemy aircraft, one MiG-3 aircraft was shot down, pilot ml. Lieutenant Zharkov died. At 5.35 a group of 18 bombers,

escorted by 7 Me-109 fighters, dropped bombs in the eastern part of the airfield 400m at the edge of the forest (as in the text. - *M.S.). As a result of an enemy air raid, 3 people from the 156th battalion* (airfield maintenance battalion. - *M.S.) were killed, 26 people were injured, including pilot Jr. lieutenant Artamonov, the rest are Red Army soldiers of the 156th battalion.*

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Second. At *8.40, two Yu-88 aircraft at an altitude of 5000m reconnoitered the airfield, made two turns over the airfield, after which one aircraft flew to the west and one to the east. At 10.20, at an altitude of 2500 m,*

three groups of bombers appeared - about 30 aircraft of an unidentified type bombed the V-Mazowieck airfield. Our fighters, consisting of 12 MiG-3 aircraft, flew out, but did not conduct air combat, due to the fact that enemy bombers managed to drop bombs on the airfield and retreat to their territory. As a result of the bombing raid, a gas storage facility caught fire, a large number of vehicles were destroyed, and up to 15 MiG-3 aircraft were burned on the ground. 4 pilots, 1 technician and 1 junior specialist were killed, 2 pilots and 3 technicians were wounded. ***Third.*** *At 11.15, 6 Me-110 aircraft carried out dive bombing and assault operations on aircraft located at the airfield. Within 20 minutes of the raid, up to 12 MiG-3, 2 I-16, 4 UTI-4 aircraft were destroyed and one I-16 was shot*

down in the air. In this raid, our fighters, consisting of 3 MiG-3 aircraft, took off and started an air battle. During the air battle, one enemy plane Me-109 (so in the text.) was shot down *by Captain Kruglov.* ***Fourth.*** *At 15.30, a group of 18 bombers and 7 Me-110 attack aircraft bombed and assaulted aircraft and personnel on the ground. In this raid, the regiment did not carry out combat operations* ***due to the lack of materiel*** (emphasized by me. - *M.S.). The remaining materiel in the amount of 6 MiG-3 aircraft was transferred to the Ross airfield. At 16.20, 9 Do-17 aircraft, accompanied*

by 7 Me 110 fighters, attacked the airfield, as a result of which our aircraft were completely disabled by dropped bombs. ***Fifth.*** *As a result of hostilities during 22.6.41, we*

two enemy aircraft of the Me-110 type were shot down.

The regiment has aircraft losses: 68 MiG-3, 5 I-16, 7 UTI-4, 9 UT-1, 2 U-2; of which 3 I-16s were destroyed at the Lomza airfield, 9 MiG-3 aircraft were left in hangars at the Bialystok airfield; 6 MiG-3 aircraft and 2 UTI-4 aircraft were destroyed at the airfield

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Russia. One MiG-3 aircraft and one I-16 aircraft were shot down in a dogfight. The remaining aircraft were destroyed by the enemy at the V-Mazowieck airfield.

Personnel killed 9 pilots, 5 technicians, 2 ml. aviation specialist. Wounded 6 pilots, 6 technicians, 1 ml. airman. The regiment, having suffered heavy

losses in materiel, changed its deployment in the composition of 45 pilots, 50 technicians, 37 ml. aviation specialists and proceeded to put together a regiment and receive materiel for further combat operations. Beginning Headquarters Major Dryzlov

(signature) *Operations Department*

Captain Shagin (signature) ." As you can see,

the document was drawn up in great detail, even insignificant details of the events are reflected in it ("they made two turns over the airfield, after which one plane flew to the west, and one to the east"). It may very well be that they began to compose it on June 22, even before the start of the panic "relocation". A simple conclusion that

can be confidently drawn on the basis of Opersvodka No. 01 is that the 124th IAP was not "peacefully sleeping" at all - the first (and most massive) flight of the regiment's fighters took place at 4.30, an hour before the appearance of the first German intelligence officers over the airfield Vysokie-Mazowieck. The second, equally obvious conclusion is that the first flight was the last in which the 124th IAP solved some combat missions that went beyond the self-defense of its own airfield. After 4.30 in the morning, at least minimal attempts to do something were not noted: to cover our own ground troops from continuous attacks of enemy aircraft, to cover Soviet bombers, which at that very hour shot down dozens of Mölders squadron fighters (JG-51), to attack German airfields. In particular, 100 km north of Vysokie Mazowiecka were two airfields (Ozhysh and Elk) of the KG-2 bomber squadron; German fighters were not there, and the Dornier veterans of the Spanish war based on them

Do-17s (the same "high-speed" ones as our SBs) could become a training target for the "Migs" of the 124th IAP.

However, the 124th IAP failed to cope with the task of self-defense of its own airfield. This is clearly seen even from the information

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reported by the compilers of the summary. For greater clarity, we summarize it in the following table:

Таблица 9

	4.30	5.25	5.35	8.40	10.20	11.15	15.30	16.20
Вылеты истребителей 124-го ИАП	28	5 (?)	0	0	12	4 (?)	0	0
Сбито с-тов противника	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Потеряно в воздухе (только МиГ-3)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Число с-тов пр-ка, участвовавших в налете (бомб.+ истр.)	—	1+2	18+7	2+0	30+0	0+6	18+7	9+7
Уничтожено на земле (только МиГ-3)	—	0	0	0	15	12	???	???

The first three raids on the airfield end (for the Germans) in vain, and during a raid involving a large (according to the operational report) number of bombers and fighters, the Germans randomly drop bombs and do not even hit the airfield - but at the same time, the fighter regiment is practically inactive, and on no one rises to intercept enemy aircraft at 5.35.

Only after making sure that the bombing of the Wysokie Mazowieck airfield is not too dangerous, the Germans send (without fighter cover!) A large formation of bombers, which at 10.20, 6 hours after the start of the war, thoroughly “iron” the airfield. The command (if there was one at that time) and the flight crew of the 124th IAP patiently wait for the completion of the bombing, after which *“12 MiG-3 aircraft took off, but did not conduct air combat due to the fact that the enemy bombers managed to drop bombs on the airfield and leave to your territory."* It is worth recalling here that the MiG-3 had, of course, many shortcomings, but it was the fastest serial

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fighter in the world, and in order not to catch up with a low-speed bomber at a "moment", it was necessary to give it the opportunity to fly far enough. An hour

later, 6 Me-110 attack aircraft arrive, to repel which a single flight of MiGs rises into the air under the command of Captain Kruglov (as will be shown below, at that moment he took over the duties of the regiment commander). All the rest (and by that time at least three squadrons of serviceable MiG-3s should have remained at the airfield) are inactive, which allows the Germans to shoot equipment standing on the ground *“within 20 minutes of flight” .*

After that, something happens in the 124th IAP. What exactly - one can only guess, but when at 15.30, after having lunch and having a rest, the Germans again arrive to bomb the Vysokie-Mazowieck airfield, they no longer meet even the slightest resistance "due to the lack of *materiel".* And where did she go? If you believe the compilers of Opersvodka No. 01, by that time all the losses of the “MiGs” of the regiment, in the air and on the ground, amounted to only 28 vehicles out of 70. And this is if you do not consider two dozen “donkeys” as “materiel” at all. Even with all the reservations about possible technical malfunctions, about the presence of fighters damaged during the morning raids, but not included in the list of destroyed fighters, it is easy to understand that the "lack of materiel" can have only one explanation - the materiel itself does not fly, but the pilots at the Vysoka airfield Mazowieck by that time either did not exist at all, or

they were completely paralyzed by panic. Such a conclusion, according to some - "sensational and scandalous", is quite consistent with the conclusion that 70 years ago was *recorded* in the Special Communication

of the 3rd Directorate of the NPO No. 37928 dated July 15, 1941: *The 41st and 124th IAP of the 9th mixed air division found: ... The commander of the 124th IAP, Major*

Polunin, was on vacation at the time of hostilities and arrived at the regiment only on the afternoon of June 22, when the enemy had already made two raids on the airfield. After the third raid by enemy aircraft, Polunin flew away on a UTI-4 aircraft without giving any instructions.

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The assistant commander of the 124th IAP, Captain Krugloye, who remained behind the regiment commander during his vacation, on June 22 in the morning, during a raid by fascist aviation, was confused and did not take decisive measures to combat it. All Kruglov's orders were unorganized. The planes were launched into the air not by units, but by loners, which did not give the desired effect in rebuffing enemy aircraft. Most of the MIG-3 fighters did not fire machine guns, since the team of Plant No. 1 did not have time (did not have time from February to June. - *M.S.) to adjust them. All this led to the fact that all the aircraft of the regiment were destroyed ... " (215)*

I managed to find the least amount of information on the 41st IAP, and it was the "oldest" personnel aviation regiment in the 9th SAD, which took part in the Soviet-Finnish war. In the Special Message mentioned above, we read: *“The*

commander of the 41st Aviation Regiment, Major Ershov, at the time of the enemy aircraft raid on the morning of June 22, was confused and could not organize the personnel of the regiment to repulse the enemy. Despite the fact that during the first raid of fascist aircraft on the Seburchin airfield, where the 41st IAP was stationed, the enemy ***did not disable a single combat aircraft, since they were all dispersed and camouflaged*** (emphasized by me. - *M.S.), Ershov did not take independent actions to deliver a decisive blow* [on] *enemy aircraft, waiting for instructions from the command of the 9th AD.*

Major Ershov, having a combat regiment at his disposal, instead of deciding to act in formations, sent 1-2 aircraft towards the enemy, which were destroyed by the enemy. Thus, the best pilots of the regiment were killed: Solokha, Aksyonov, Chernyavsky, and Krutoverets, Korobkov, Kukushkin and Kiselev were shot down.

Ershov, ***having no need to relocate*** (emphasized by me. - *M.S.) from the Seburchin airfield, since this airfield had everything for combat, decided to transfer the regiment to the Kuryany airfield* (7 km southeast of Bialystok. - *M.S. .), and then on the evening of June 22 he moved to the Kvater airfield. Subsequently, all the materiel was destroyed due to the fact that the aircraft at these airfields did not have air for refueling aircraft* (again the compressor, meaningless and

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merciless. - *M.S.) and cartridges for the BS machine gun, being incapacitated.* (215) At

first glance, everything in the 41st IAP "was like everyone else", but there is, however, one significant difference. Opening the Operational Report (b / n) of the headquarters of the 9th SAD compiled in Orel by 22.00 on June 30 (this is the first report since the beginning of the war that has been typewritten on normal paper), we see a round number "0" in the quantity line pilots of the 41st IAP. (234) Where are they? And they (not all, though) are fighting, and that is why the headquarters of the 9th SAD, which has run right up to Orel, does not know anything about their whereabouts. The pilots of the 41st IAP are fighting, and together with their commander, Major Yershov, as part of the 43rd NAD - the only fighter formation that remained in the Air Force of

the Western Front after the defeat of the first days. Judging by the report "On the combat work of the 43rd Air Division for 6 months of the Great Patriotic War", the 41st IAP was officially included in the 43rd IAD on June 26, 1941. At that time, the regiment was armed with 12 MiG-3s. (235) By June 29, in the 41st IAP, the same 12 MiGs and 52 pilots were in service (there were 79 before the start of the war). (236) Judging by the losses (and this is almost the only objective criterion for the situation in the summer of 1941), the regiment is fighting very actively: until the moment it was withdrawn for reorganization (July 3), 2 aircraft were shot down in an air battle, 2 “did not return from tasks", 4 fighters were damaged in accidents.

In the line "destroyed at the airfield", as expected, there is a dash. (237) This is how a very short history of the military operations of the 41st IAP looks like in a dry presentation of staff documents. In the memoirs of General G. N. Zakharov (at that time - the commander of the 43rd IAD) there are also noteworthy details: *“Near Mogilev, the 41st and 170th fighter regiments joined the 43rd air division. Major Ershov commanded the 41st IAP, Major Mishchenko commanded the 170th IAP. These regiments stayed in the division for only seven to nine days, but even in such a short time, the pilots of the regiments managed to establish themselves as excellent air fighters. For a week of fighting, Major Ershov's fighters shot down more than twenty enemy aircraft! The pilots fought without looking back - as if each of their battles was the only one ..*

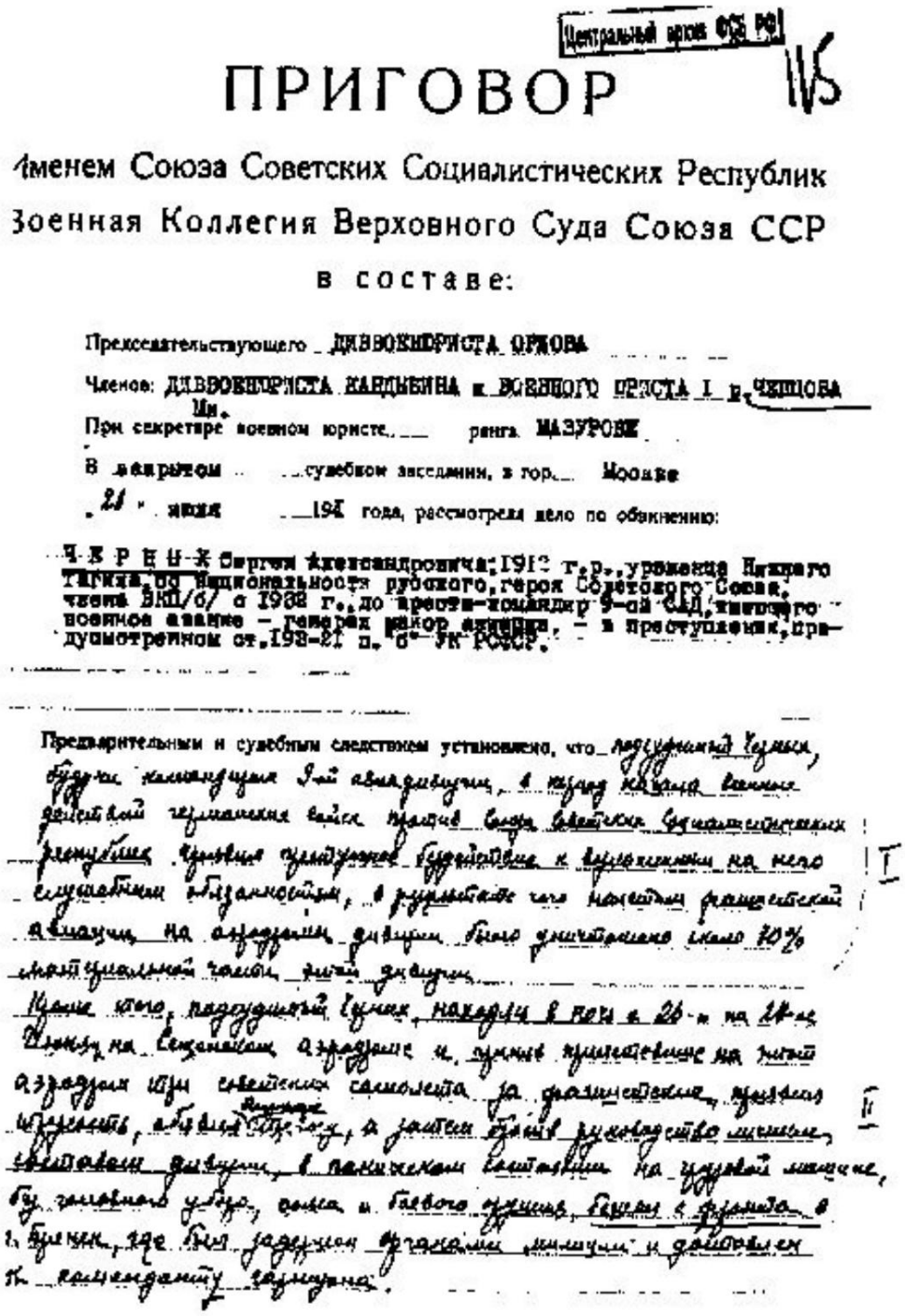
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At the end of the story about the actions and inaction of the fighter units of the 9th SAD, we will try to at least roughly estimate the number of enemy losses. In total, on June 22, 1941, the 2nd Air Fleet of the Luftwaffe lost 25 aircraft irretrievably from enemy action, another 21 aircraft received damage of varying severity. (241) The toponymy of the “Biaÿystok ledge” as an indication of the place of air combat (loss of an aircraft) is explicitly found five times: a Do-17 bomber from the KG-2 was completely shot down in the Lomza area, two Me-110s from the SKG-210 squadron were also 100% shot down in the Zambrow area (between Tarnowo and Vysokie Mazowiecki), one Messerschmitt of the JG-27 squadron was shot down in the Knyszyn area (30 km north of Bialystok) and another Messer of the 51st squadron received minor damage (10%) in the Belsk area. To tell the truth, the shelling of ZA is indicated as the reason for the loss of two Me-110s, but the Germans could be mistaken in this matter.

Another thing is more important - out of 46 cases of loss and / or damage to an aircraft, the battlefield is indicated only in 18 cases. With some stretch, this proportion can also be extended to the number of aircraft shot down in the 9th SAD base area. With such assumptions, it can be assumed that the fighters of the division shot down (damaged) about 8 - 10 German aircraft. As you can see, the final figure is quite within the normal 2-fold overestimation of the number of declared victories in comparison with real ones (if by “declared” we mean quotes from documents, and not “hunting stories” from post-war uplifting memoirs). In the strange,

confusing and still unrevealed story of the defeat of the 9th SAD, the most important question remains open: who nevertheless made the decision to “fighter redeployment” of air regiments, hasty redeployment, “without cartridges for the EU machine gun” and with *an* abandoned airfield equipment? What exactly did the command of the 9th SAD do from morning to evening on June 22? Did he have 10 - 15 minutes of flight time in order to visit advanced airfields? Or did General Chernykh limit himself to merely stating a non-existent fact (“all fighters were destroyed”)?

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ПРИГОВОР

Именем Союза Советских Социалистических Республик

Военная Коллегия Верховного Суда Союза ССР

в составе:

Председательствующего ДИВВОЕНЮРИСТА ОРЛОВА

Членов: ДИВВОЕНЮРИСТА КАНДЫБИНА и ВОЕННОГО ЮРИСТА I р. ЧЕПЦОВА

При секретаре военном юристе ранга МАЗУРОВЕ

В закрытом судебном заседании, в гор. Москве

21 июня 194 года, рассмотрела дело по обвинению:

ЧЕРНЫХ Сергея Александровича, 1912 г.р., уроженца Нижнего Тагила, по национальности русского, героя Советского Союза, члена ВКП(б) с 1938 г., до ареста-командир 9-ой СД, имеющего военное звание - генерал-майор авиации, - в преступлении, предусмотренном ст. 193-21 п. "б" УК РСФСР.

Предварительным и судебным следствием установлено, что подсудимый Черных, будучи командующим 3-й авиадивизии, в период начала военных действий германских войск против Союза Советских Социалистических Республик, проявил преступное бездействие и попустительство к выполнению им долга службы, в результате чего немецкими фашистскими авиацией на аэродромах дивизии было уничтожено около 70% материальной части этих дивизий.

Кроме того, подсудимый Черных, находясь в ночь с 26-го на 27-е июня на командном аэродроме и лично присутствуя на этом аэродроме при советских самолетах, фашистских бомбах, сбрасываемых с них, и при стрельбе зенитных средств, а также будучи руководителем военных действий дивизии, в панических настроениях на командном пункте бросил управление войсками, самолет и бежал с фронта в тыл, где был задержан органами милиции и доставлен к коменданту гарнизона.

The verdict of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR in the case of Major General Chernykh

A very strange "answer" to these questions was found in a completely unexpected place - in the archives of the 1st Tank Division of the Leningrad Military District. The beginning of the war this division

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met in trains, relocating from Pskov to the distant Arctic town of Alakurtti. The 1st Panzer had and could not have had any relation to the military operations of the Western Front (and even more so to the war in the air), however, it was in the archive fund of this formation that I managed to find[21] a copy of the order of the commander of the Western Front No. 04 dated July 8, 1941: *“On the*

bringing to trial of the Military Tribunal. The commander of the 9th SAD, Major General Chernykh, as a result of a criminal attitude to his official duties, complete disregard for the situation, forbade the relocation of the materiel (emphasis added by me. - *M.S.), which contributed to the destruction of aircraft by the enemy at the airfield ... ” (239)* Strange.

Both the Special Communication of the 3rd Directorate of the NPO (military counterintelligence), cited above, and the facts now known indicate that there was no need for a hasty “relocation”, and it was precisely this that served as the impetus for the collapse of the division ...

Materials of the investigation and protocols of interrogations C Chernykh (Criminal Investigation Case No. R-23923) is still inaccessible to historians - not to mention the fact that the specific "methods of investigation" of the NKVD will inevitably cast doubt on the reliability of the testimony, once they are declassified. The only thing that is known and beyond doubt is the verdict of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, issued on July 28, 1941:

“ ... *The preliminary and judicial investigation established that the defendant Chernykh, being the commander of the 9 The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics showed criminal inaction in the duties assigned to it, as a result of which about 70% of the material part of this division was destroyed by a raid by fascist aviation on the airfields of the division.*

In addition, the defendant Chernykh, being at the Seshchensky airfield on the night of June 26-27 and mistaking the three Soviet aircraft that arrived at this airfield for fascist ones, showed cowardice, announced an aimless alarm, and then, leaving the leadership of the personnel of the division, in a panic state on a truck , headless

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dress, belt and military weapons fled from the front to the city of Bryansk, where he was detained by the police and taken to the commandant of the garrison. Being in Bryansk, the defendant Chernykh spread provocative fabrications about the landing and bombing of the Seschensky airfield by an alleged enemy. Thus, the defendant Chernykh, during the hostilities with Nazi Germany, violated his military oath, forgot his duty to the socialist Motherland, showed cowardice and, leaving the leadership of the personnel of the division, shamefully fled from the front to the city of Bryansk, where he spread provocative rumors about the defeat of the Red Army, than committed the crime under Art. 193-21 p. "b" of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR.

Based on the aforesaid and guided by Article. 319 and 320 of the Criminal Code RSFSR, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR sentenced: Chernykh Sergey Alexandrovich to be deprived of the military rank of "major general of aviation" and subjected to the highest measure of punishment - execution with confiscation of all property belonging to him personally. Based on Art. 33 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR to file a petition before the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to deprive the Black title of Hero of the Soviet Union and orders - Lenin, the Red Star and the jubilee medal "20 years of the Red Army". The verdict is final and not subject to cassation appeal. (240) On July 30, 1941, the commission of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (Bolsheviks) on judicial matters decided (Minutes No. 50 signed by Kalinin, Shkiryatov and Merkulov) *“to agree with the use of execution against ChernyS. A.".* And according to the laws / concepts that existed then, and according to the established long-term practice, after that it only remained to transfer the convict to the disposal of the NKVD firing squad. However, the whole of August and September passed, and Chernykh remained alive. He was shot only on October 16, 1941, when the central apparatus of the NKVD itself began a hasty “relocation” from Moscow to the east. What it was, why and for what "operational developments" the former general was kept alive - no one knows the answer to these questions to this day.

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2.4. In the main strike zone

“Despite the numerical superiority of the enemy Air Force and the surprise attack, the flight crew of the division’s units boldly and selflessly repelled all enemy raids on the airfields and bases of the division. The command of the division, taking into account the current situation, in the absence of communication with the headquarters of the ZapOVO, maneuvering airfields, promptly removed 18 fighter aircraft and 17 bombers from under attack. On 26 and 27.6.41, the units and the command and control of the division finally left the battle, retaining 95% of the flight technical staff, which was sent to the plant for receiving and for retraining on new materiel. (242)

So, confidently and cheerfully, the command of the 10th SAD reported on its achievements on October 17, 1941. Just two months ago other estimates were given; in particular, in the certificate “Changes in the composition and deployment of the Air Force of the Western Front for the period from 22.6 to 10.8 41”, the changes that occurred in the 10th SAD were described as follows: “From 24.6.41 it fell apart, part of the flight crew was sent to Bobruisk, and *then nothing is known. The headquarters of the AD under No. 10 AD operates as part of the Air Force of the Front.* (247) But then - in the summer, and by mid-October the division was recreated and was already again withdrawn to the rear for reorganization, gratitude was announced to the command staff " *for the successful work and skillful leadership of the combat work of the units",* and most importantly - everything by that time had already knew that the storm had passed. Those who were destined to be shot were shot, those left alive can already fearlessly report how, in the “current situation”, they “timely pulled out of the strike” 95% of the flight crew, losing (in all

meanings of the word) 85% of combat aircraft . And the rough wall of the execution cellar was so close! The 10th SAD was under operational control of the commander of the 4th Army, Major General Korobkov. The general was arrested, tried (together with the commander and chief of staff of the Western Front) and on July 22, 1941 was sentenced to death; the same night the sentence was carried out. And h

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mechanized corps, burned down in the battle with the elite units of the 2nd Panzer Group of Guderian. The commander of the 14th MK, Major General Oborin, was also arrested and on August 13, 1941 was sentenced to death. Neither previous merits, nor the indisputable fact of the quantitative and qualitative superiority of enemy tanks, nor the wounding of the mechanized corps commander in battle - nothing was taken into account. Shot. The commander of the 10th SAD had a serious "chance" to be on the same list, but fate was merciful to him.

The worst fate awaited the division entrusted to him. The 10th SAD was based in the area of Brest, Kobrin, Pruzhany, i.e. exactly in the zone of the main attack of the 2nd Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht. In order to provide Guderian's tankers with reliable air cover, the German command concentrated a powerful Luftwaffe grouping west of Brest. By the morning of June 22, there was the largest (four air groups) fighter squadron JG-51 under the command of the best Luftwaffe ace V. Mölders at that time, another, fifth in a row, fighter group (I / JG-53) was based along with 51 fighters th squadron at the Krzhevica airfield (see Map No. 4). All five groups were completely re-equipped with the latest Bf-109F Messer, of which there were 156 units in good condition. Three groups of dive bombers of the StG-77 squadron (a total of 87 serviceable Ju-87s) were deployed 20-30 km from the border, a little further in the depth of the operational formation there were two groups of multi-purpose Me-110s (a total of 74 serviceable vehicles). What could the 10th SAD oppose to this? The division had four air

regiments: two fighter (33rd IAP and 123rd IAP), one assault (74th ShAP) and one bomber (39th BAP). The fighter regiments were supposed to be re-equipped with the Yak-1 in the period March - May 1941 (in total, according to the plan, the division was supposed to receive 126 of these aircraft, which were to become the most massive type of Soviet Air Force fighter during the war). (243) The plans, however, were not fulfilled, and by the beginning of the war, the 123rd IAP alone managed to receive 20 "yaks"; the new aircraft arrived at the unit just a few days before June 22, and they had not yet been put into operation by the first air battles (there is evidence that they were still in the process of assembly). (244)

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As a result, the pilots of the 10th SAD had to fight on “old types” aircraft, and these “types” turned out to be very different: the 123rd IAP was fully equipped with I-153 “seagulls” of 1940 release, in good technical condition, with the most powerful engines (M-63), while the 33rd IAP developed the last motor resources of the antediluvian I-16 type 5 (version with two machine guns [22]
rifle caliber and M-25 engine) produced in 1936 - 1937. (245) The —

assault regiment of the division, like all other assault regiments of the Soviet Air Force on the eve of the war, was armed with I-15 / I-153 biplanes, but, unlike many other regiments, it was equipped with a full staff rate (47 I-15bis and 15 I-153); in addition to that, the 74th ShAP was one of the very first to receive the latest Il-2 attack aircraft at that time in the amount of 8 units. (246) The Bomber Regiment (39th BAP) was "old", personnel, with combat experience of the "winter war" against Finland. On the eve of June 22, the regiment had 5 (according to other sources - 9) new Pe-2 dive bombers, but 43 SB veterans remained the main armament of the 39th BAP. (246) A characteristic feature of the 10th SAD

was a supernumerary excess of flight personnel - 70 or more pilots in a fighter and assault regiment. Another feature (although it would be more correct to say - dignity) of the division was very active, by the standards of the Air Force of the Western OVO, flight and tactical training of pilots. During the winter period (until May 1), 1941, the division flew 4091 hours (an average of 14 hours for each crew flying independently on a combat aircraft), including 117 hours of night flights (for comparison, we note that in a much larger composition The 9th SAD night raid was only 41 hours). The division carried out 875 aerial firings (more than the 11th MAD and 9th MAD combined), and the only bomber regiment of the 9th MAD carried out 241 practice bombings - slightly less than an entire bomber division (12th BAD - 285 bombing). (248) In June, the 39th BAP began training crews for the transition to new dive bombers, for which, from June 2 to June 15, 80 training dives were performed at an angle of 30 - 40 degrees, on existing SB aircraft. (249)

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Of course, we should not forget that the main evaluation criterion is by no means a comparison with neighbors in the district. We had to fight with a strong enemy, on average 5 training bombings and 3 aerial firing per crew could hardly be considered a sufficient level of training to meet the Luftwaffe pilots, who by that time had accumulated considerable experience in real combat operations. It remained only to hope that part of the flight and most of the commanders of the 10th SAD also had time to fight fairly in the skies of Spain, China and Finland.

The airfield network in the deployment zone of the 10th SAD consisted of 21 sites: 4 permanent and 17 operational airfields, of which 9 required expansion due to the expected arrival of new aircraft. (250) On May 17, 1941, the air regiments of the 10th SAD, as well as other air force divisions of the Western OVO, were withdrawn to field operational airfields: the 33rd IAP from Pruzhany to Kuplin, the 74th ShAP from Pruzhany to Malye Zvody, 123rd IAP from Strigovo to Ogorodniki, Name Day. (251) In addition, the 123rd IAP at the airfields of Brest and Lyshchitsy *"for a month and a half kept one squadron in ambush to intercept German aircraft flying to our territory." (244)* Thus, before the start of the war, the 10th SAD fighters were in the band 20-50 km from the border - much closer than the fighter regiments of all other aviation units of the western districts (with the only exception of the 9th SAD). Only the 39th BAP remained at its permanent Pinsk airfield (150 km east of Brest).

As noted above, on June 20, 1941, the commander of the 10th SAD received an order from the commander of the Air Force of the Western OVO to put the units on alert, to prohibit vacations for command personnel, and to recall those on vacation to units. Judging by the report "On the work of the 33rd Fighter Aviation Regiment in the period 22-28.6.41", this order - at least in part related to the 33rd IAP and recall from vacations - was carried out: out of 291 personal the composition *"did not arrive from vacations, business trips and was in the hospitals of the district"* only 23 people, including one pilot. (252) In addition, as Colonel Belov writes in his memoirs, *“the commanders of the regiments received my order: to disperse the planes abroad*

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airfield, personnel from the location of the camp should not be released. (216) On the

night of June 22, no one slept in Kobrin - neither at the headquarters of the 10th SAD, nor at the headquarters of the 4th Army. After midnight, Belov was summoned to the commander of the 4th Army, Major General Korobkov. The conversation that took place in Belov's

memoirs is described as follows:

“General Korobkov was alone. “An order has been received to put the headquarters on aler He.

"In that case, I'll put the division on alert." "Don't panic,"

the commander stopped me. - I already wanted to raise one division, but the district commander forbade it. - I command an air division, and even a border one, and I'm

not going to ask anyone for permission. I have the right to raise units of the division on combat alert at any time ... At about 2 o'clock in the morning I give the order "Combat alert". It is transmitted by

telephone, duplicated by radio. A few minutes later, confirmation was received from three regiments ***about the receipt of the signal and its execution*** (underlined by me. - *M.S.) ... ”* This is a memoir. In the documents of the 123rd IAP, we find clear confirmation of both the receipt

and execution of the order: *“At 2.00 22.6.41, a combat alert was announced to the regiment based at the airfields of Strigovo, Imenin, Brest and Lyshchitsy and the task was set by a preliminary order - to be ready for combat action." (253)* In the documents of the 33rd IAP, the circumstances of the announcement of a combat alert are described in the most surprising way: “1. *At 03.10 on June 22, 1941, a combat alert was announced at the Kuplin airfield. The reason for declaring the alarm was that an unknown aircraft had raided the Kuplin airfield and opened fire on the newly built Pruzhany airfield and on the northern outskirts of the city of Pruzhany.* (254) What kind of “petrel” was hovering in the predawn haze over Pruzhany and the Kuplin airfield (4 km northeast of Pruzhany) - I don’t even have a hypothetical answer to this question. In any case, there were no losses on the ground, and the

33rd IAP was awakened in a timely manner: *“2. Regiment consisting of 31 aircraft (of which 25 I-16 and 6 I-153)*

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was prepared for combat operations and dispersed by squadron at the Kuplin airfield. The personnel of the regiment was before the announcement of the alarm at the location of the camp, and after the announcement - at the aircraft, waiting for the departure signal to repel the raid of enemy bombers and fighters. (254)

The telephone connection with the Malye Zvody airfield turned out to be broken (the airfield was 15 km from the border, and German saboteurs could have “worked” there), and Belov sent his deputy to the 74th ShAP: “Not being sure that the 74th *assault the regiment received a combat alarm signal, I am sending Colonel Bondarenko there ... Colonel Bondarenko flew to the 74th ShAP on a Po-2 plane* (it is difficult to “decommunicate” an air division, whose planes in themselves are an excellent means of communication. - *M.S.) at 3 one o'clock in the morning and upon arrival announced a*

combat alert. (216) So in different ways, but in all cases - before the first enemy air raid, - a combat alert was announced in parts of the 10th SAD. The fighting of the division in the pre-war base area did not last long - this can be seen not only from the documents of the regiments and the division, but also from the reports of the German fighter squadrons, where reports of Soviet fighters shot down in the Brest-Kobrin area end at about 10 - 11 am on June 22 . The air regiments of the division spent these first 6-7 hours of the war in an even more different way.

Noticeable traces of the fighting **of the 74th ShAP** could not be found. Combat report No. 1 of the headquarters of the 10th SAD by 14.45 on 22.6.41 (written with a black pencil on a piece of school notebook in a box) briefly states: “74 *ShAP stationed at the Malye Zvody airfield, materiel from assault attacks and bombardment was withdrawn by 100% . There are no losses of the flight crew, they left in the direction of the city of Pruzhany* (i.e. to the place of permanent deployment of the regiment and residence of the families of the command staff. - *M.S.)* ”. (255) In the post-war memoirs of Colonel Belov, this

episode is described in a little more detail: *“4 hours 15 minutes. The airfield of the 74th Assault Regiment was attacked by aviation. There were absolutely no air defense systems at the airfield. 10 "Messerschmitts" и*

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aircraft. As a result, all fifteen I-15s and two Il-2s were destroyed. The pilots who were in the planes did not have time to take off. ***Left without planes*** (emphasized by me. - *M.S.), the personnel took away the documents, the banner and, under the command of the chief of staff, Major Mishchenko, departed to the east ... ”*
Colonel Belov passed away in 1972. It is *already* impossible to ask him what *“all fifteen”* means if there were 62 of them all [23] . So “completely” that there was nothing to repair or evacuate. Given the situation with the closed archives of the military prosecutor's office that exists to this day, we don’t even know if anyone asked the commander of the 10th SAD about why there were “absolutely no air defense systems” at the airfield 15 km from the border . If they really didn't exist. We only know the report of the commissioner of the 3rd department (counterintelligence) for the 10th SAD, Comrade Leonov, dated June 27, 1941, where the same thought is expressed somewhat differently: "The anti-aircraft machine *guns at the airfields were inactive." (53)*

The most surprising thing in the history of the disappearance of the 74th ShAP is the fate of 8 Il-2 armored attack aircraft, of which “all two” were allegedly destroyed by machine-gun and cannon fire on the ground (which in itself is not very plausible). The fact is that the IL-2 at that time was considered a top secret weapon of the Red Army. V. B. Emelianenko writes in his memoirs how in mid-June 1941 his 4th ShAP was re-equipped with Il-2. First, the pilots studied the hydro- and electrical circuits of a certain mysterious "aircraft H", which they were not shown even in the picture! When the first few “silts” were brought from Voronezh, from factory No. 18, the *“military with red buttonholes” (i.e.,* the NKVD) covered the planes, sealed the ties of the covers and put up their (!) Guards. (256)

It is difficult to understand how the division and regiment commanders could “get away with” leaving such aircraft to the enemy (by the way, where was the commander of the 74th ShAP if the banner and documents were taken to the east by the chief of staff?) is difficult to understand. It is even more difficult to reconcile the 100% destruction of the materiel of the 74th ShAP declared in the Combat Report No. 1 (and repeated in post-war memoirs) with that presented in the archival file

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regiment with a message that in the period from June 22 to June 28, the regiment made 15 sorties and lost 4 pilots ... (272)

The fighting of the 33rd IAP lasted six hours, from 4 am to 10 am. In the report compiled on June 29, 1941, signed by the chief of staff of the regiment, Major Shevyakov, “On the work of the 33rd Fighter Aviation Regiment in the period 22–28.6.41,” the events of these hours fall into the following four episodes:

“... a) In the period 4.41 to 5.20, the regiment’s subunits made sorties to intercept enemy aircraft in the area of Kuplin, Brest, Kobrin (comparing this record with other evidence, we can assume that it was during these sorties squadron commander senior lieutenant Nyunin shot down one enemy reconnaissance aircraft in the Brest area. - *M.S.).*

b) From 5.55 to 6.55, the regiment as part of a squadron flew towards 18 Xe-111 aircraft flying under the cover of 3 Me-109 aircraft from the Kobrin direction to Pruzhany. Due to the superiority of enemy forces in the air, the bombers managed to drop bombs on the southeastern outskirts of the Kuplin airfield and the northern part of the city of Pruzhany and leave on a course for Brest. As a result of the bombardment, the following burned down on the ground: 1 MiG-1, 1 I-16, 1 UTI-4, 1 Ut-1, 1 MiG-1 and 1 U-2 were disabled (i.e., in fact, the regiment lost one and only a combat aircraft, MiGs were not mastered in this regiment and were of no practical value on the morning of June 22. - *M.S.). 7 people were killed (including 1 pilot), 6 people were injured (including 1 pilot). One I-153 aircraft piloted by Lieutenant Gudimov did not return after an air battle* (further in the report it is said that Gudimov shot down two Heinkel-111s in this battle; in Belov's memoirs and other post-war publications it is reported that Gudimov made an air ram and died. - *M.S.) After an air battle with bombers, the regiment landed at its airfield and prepared for a sortie. c) At 8 o'clock. 50 min. On June 22, 1941, 18 Me-109 aircraft raided the*

airfield with an unexpected strafing flight. Our planes failed to take off due to the non-reporting by VNOS posts and their late detection. As a result of the assault raid, which lasted about 40 minutes (the figure is absolutely unrealistic both in terms of the supply of gasoline and

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according to the Messerschmitt ammunition load. - *M.S.), was set on fire and burned on the ground: 10 I-16s, 2 I-153s, 11 I-16s, 3 I-153s were damaged. There were no casualties among the personnel. Remained intact: 3 I-16, 1 U-2,*

1 Ut-1. d) At 10.00, when Xe-111 bombers appeared in the Kobrin, Strigovo area, the remaining I-16 link was lifted into the air, which made an air battle. As a result of the battle, one I-16 aircraft, piloted by Art. lieutenant [24] *Lysenko, and two I-16 aircraft were put out of action. The enemy bombers left with a course for Baranovichi ...* — ·

In view of the destruction of the materiel, in order to preserve the personnel and combat crews of the regiment, the entire flight and technical staff was put on vehicles and sent at 21.00 22.6.41 to the mountains. Pinsk, where he began to arrive at 12 - 14 o'clock on 23.6.41 ... " (254)

As you can see, the history of the military operations of the 33rd IAP in the first hours of the war is very similar to the history of the defeat of the 124th IAP (9th SAD) described above. The regiment not only was not "sleeping peacefully", but also managed to carry out several group sorties to intercept German aircraft in the border zone. The first enemy air raid on the airfield of the 33rd IAP takes place only two hours after the actual start of hostilities - a rather eloquent illustration of the fact that the frail forces of the Luftwaffe were not enough for a one-time strike even on the airfields of the Soviet Air Force closest to the border.

As in many other cases, German bombers go on a mission with minimal fighter cover. *“Due to the superiority of enemy forces in the air, the bombers managed to drop bombs on the southeastern outskirts of the airfield,”* writes the chief of staff of the 33rd IAP. From the standpoint of our current knowledge of the events of June 22, it would be more appropriate to emphasize that, in view of the resistance offered by the Soviet fighters, the Germans hurried to drop bombs on the outskirts of the airfield and, without achieving any significant success, "leave the course for Brest. " It is also worth noting here that, according to the Combat Report of the headquarters of the 10th SAD No. 1 dated 14.45 on June 22, drawn up in hot pursuit, there were 15 bombers, and nothing was said about the presence of a fighter escort. (257)

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The defeat of the 33rd IAP took place three hours later and only because during the assault raid of German fighters there was no resistance to them. It is noteworthy that in the Combat Report No. 1 there are only 9 Messerschmitts, and they doubled later, in the report of the regiment headquarters of June 29. There are different ways to assess the fact of the unhindered shooting of combat aircraft, but there is no doubt that on the I-16 type 5, engaging in battle with the latest “Messers” blocking the airfield was tantamount to a heroic deed (or suicide). Be that as it may, only 13 aircraft (11 I-16 and 2 I-153) were irretrievably destroyed at the Kuplin airfield, and 14 damaged ones could theoretically be restored if the situation did not force them to leave the airfield, to which (in this case - quite real!) German tank tanks were approaching

columns.

The 33rd IAP left its airfield in a big mess. Having a significant reserve of time (from 10 am to 9 pm - if the report that the relocation to Pinsk began only late in the evening of June 22 is true) and a considerable number of vehicles ("the entire flight crew was put on vehicles"), *the* regiment threw a mountain of property in short supply at the deserted airfield. In the report of the chief of staff of the 33rd IAP, Major Shevyakov (compiled no earlier than July 6)

we read:

"…4. Teaching aids - both in the lagsbor at the Kuplin airfield, and in the mountains. Pruzhany, left in the places of deployment.

5. Spare parts and equipment for aircraft (ladders, blocks, (inaudible. - *M.S.), spare parts for current repairs), located in the storage rooms, were left in place. 6. From armament left: one training machine*

gun BS, 500 rounds for ShKAS, heavy machine gun "Maxim" and ***46 camera guns (!),*** *Of which some were destroyed during the bombardment, and some were left.*

7. The commander of the 197th BAO, battalion commissar Karpukhin, was ordered to destroy or blow up all staff property, warehouses, gasoline and bomb storage when the spacecraft units retreated. (258)

It is not clear why Major Shevyakov decided that the battalion commissar Karpukhin would linger at the Kuplin airfield for at least a minute

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longer than the major himself. And what is already quite strange is the way in which the headquarters of the 33rd IAP disposed of its secret documents: *“Secret documentation for 1941 (personal files, lists of personnel, stamps and seals) located at the location of the camp of the Kuplin airfield were handed over under receipt to the Pruzhany district military commissariat on 22.6.41.* (258) Let's pay tribute to comrade Leonov (authorized by the 3rd department for the 10th SAD), he foresaw exactly such a development of events: “With the advancing of the *enemy on the air garrison of the 123rd and 33rd IAP, the reserves will apparently not be destroyed, since the evacuation is not organized at all, they are running in disorder, the main attention of these garrisons will be focused on saving the*

lives of families ... ” (53) the affairs of the pilots. And now, on September 28, 1941, the new chief of staff of the 33rd IAP, Lieutenant Colonel Borkus, wrote a dispatch to the head of the personnel department of the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air Force: *“When leaving the mountains. Pruzhany, Zap. Belarus, by us to the military commissar of the mountains. Pruzhany were handed over on receipt personal files on the personnel of the regiment, as well as all the secret documents that we urgently need at the moment ... ”(259)* At the end of the sad story of the defeat

of the 33rd IAP, we note one curiosity from recent history. In an article dedicated to the JG 51 squadron and its commander, the famous German ace W. Mölders, Dmitry Khazanov writes:

“The 33rd IAP, located in the Pruzhany area, was subjected to four strikes: at 06.17, at 21.20, then at 21.31 and 21.38 - a total of about 120 German bombers and fighters attacked the Soviet airfield. It was the last three raids that caused the most damage. Nine Bf-109Fs from 4/ JG51, led by Lieutenant E. Hohagen, who appeared at sunset, blocked the air base, attacking the parking lots at the same time, and then two more groups of Messers approached at short intervals. Upon their return, the German pilots reported the destruction of 17 Soviet aircraft on the ground. (260) If this time, copying from an unspecified

German source, Mr. Khazanov was not mistaken and did not mix up 9 pm and 9 am, then

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before us is a clear example of how the myth of a “destructive strike on Soviet airfields” is supported by the joint efforts of the “East” and “West” - in reality, by 22.20 (local “Soviet” time) there were no serviceable aircraft at the Kuplin airfield for a long time, no pilots, and the Germans mediocrely spent half a tank of aviation gasoline so that the aces of Mölders could report about the next “destruction of Soviet aircraft on the ground” ...

The Germans received a real rebuff (and with very tangible consequences for them) only from the **123rd IAP.** This regiment (relatively young - formed in March 1940) even before the war became one of the best in combat training in the Air Force of the Western OVO. The commander of the regiment, Major B. Surin, is also highly appreciated in a report dated May 15, 1941 by the commander of the Air Force of the district, Major General I. Kopets [25] . By the time the hostilities began, the total flight time of the pilots of the 123rd IAP was 7600 hours, 30 nightlights were trained in the regiment - a very high figure for aviation of that era. Of the 87 pilots of the regiment, only 10 people were in the first year of service, 47 in the second and 30 in the third. (261) At the end of the night of June 22, the regiment was organized in an

organized way on combat alert and, with the first rays of dawn, entered into air battles. At first glance (especially if this view was formed in the process of playing computer "flying-shooters" and chattering on the corresponding Internet forums), a battle between the indisputably outdated I-153 biplanes and the latest "Messers" of the F series was impossible in principle. It seems that German pilots had a similar opinion on the morning of June 22, for whom the archaic appearance of the "seagull" aroused anticipation of easy prey, and they readily rushed into the attack, thereby solving the main problem of the "gull" - to catch up with the German fighter, evading from the battle, she would

not be able to (the difference in maximum flight speeds is about 160 km / h). F. Schiess, who lived to the end of the war and earned the Order of the Knight's Cross in it, at the beginning of the war on the Eastern Front, was a headquarters pilot of the squadron JG-53, recalled the air bat

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met with a group of 20 Curtiss fighters (the designation of Polikarpov's biplanes adopted in the Luftwaffe), *whose pilots perfectly understood what needed to be done. They began to try to get behind us and were able to take an advantageous position to open fire. The Russians quickly turned around 180 degrees, and went out to our forehead. In such a battle, only a lucky one could win a victory ... "* No doubt - such "lucky

ones", i. there were many well-trained pilots with vast experience in air warfare in the fighter groups of the 2nd Air Corps of the Luftwaffe; both squadrons (JG 51 and JG-53) went through the harsh "school" of air combat over France and the British Isles, and the one who after that lived until June 22, 1941, knew his business firmly. From 03.47 to 10.10 (Berlin time) German pilots reported 15 "seagulls" shot down in the Brest, Kobrin area. (262) This figure is exaggerated, but surprisingly modest. The reports of the headquarters of the 10th SAD, compiled in the

afternoon of June 22, speak of 4 shot down and 5 missing pilots of the 123rd IAP. (255) In the combat log of the regiment (most likely written retroactively) we read: *“Until 13.00, 30 enemy aircraft were destroyed in air battles. Their losses amounted to 9 aircraft shot down and 18 damaged. The latter were subjected to immediate restoration repairs.* (263) It is not entirely clear whether the number of damaged refers only to the results of air battles, or whether it also includes aircraft damaged by the enemy during the bombing of the airfields of the regiment. In the “Brief combat history of the 123rd IAP”, compiled no earlier than January 25, 1942, the mention of 18 damaged ones disappears, but all other figures remain unchanged: “During the first day of the war, the pilots of the regiment shot down 30 fascist aircraft, while losing *9 of their aircraft ".* (264) The number of declared victories of the pilots of the 123rd IAP is also exaggerated, exaggerated more

than the Germans (which is psychologically quite understandable), but the real losses of the enemy were quite tangible. The fighters of the JG-51 squadron irrevocably (damaged by 60 percent or more) lost 5 Messerschmitts from the enemy’s impact, another 4 received damage of varying severity. With the exception of one "Messer", who received

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minor (10%) damage in the area of Belsk (presumably in a battle with fighters of the 126th IAP of the 9th SAD), all other losses were incurred in the Brest area, and the 123rd IAP is their most likely "culprit".

And this is only the beginning of the list of real victories of the pilots of the 123rd IAP. Two dive Junkers-87s were completely shot down in the Brest, Kobrin area. In the Pinsk area, where the remnants of the 123rd IAP were relocated in the afternoon (which will be discussed below), one Me-110 was also completely shot down. In the same place, in the sky over Pinsk, the "Junkers-88" of the commander of the I / KG-3 air group was fired upon; Major Heinze himself and another crew member were wounded, but the plane was able to reach German-controlled territory and make an emergency landing. In addition to these losses, with a high degree of probability associated with the actions of the 123rd IAP, the German air units that fought on June 22, 1941 on the southern flank of the "Bialystok ledge", irrevocably lost two Junkers from the KG-3 squadron, four more bombers of this squadron and one "Heinkel-111"

from the KG-53 squadron received damage of varying degrees. Taking into account that the fighters of the 33rd IAP - even according to their own reports - claimed only 3 Heinkels shot down, it can be assumed that if not 30, then 10 - 12 enemy aircraft were actually shot down or damaged by the pilots of the 123rd IAP. Considering which planes and which enemy they had to fight, the figure is completely staggering. There was a heavy price to pay for such success. The first day of the war was the last in the life of the commander of the 123rd IAP, Major Surin; he spent four air battles, in the fifth sortie he was seriously wounded and died while trying to land the plane at the Imenin airfield. By the

beginning of hostilities, the 123rd IAP was armed with 58 I-153s and 20 Yak-1s, which were listed as “in assembly”. (261) Further, any arithmetic ceases to operate - even in such a far from ordinary regiment. *“20 Yak-1s, which were in a state of assembly, and 18 I-153s, which were under repair after an air battle, were burned on June 22, 1941 during the attack on the Imenin airfield.” (265)* Three pages later in the same document (“Brief Combat History of the 123rd IAP”) it is reported that *“by the end of the first day of the war, the forces of the tech*

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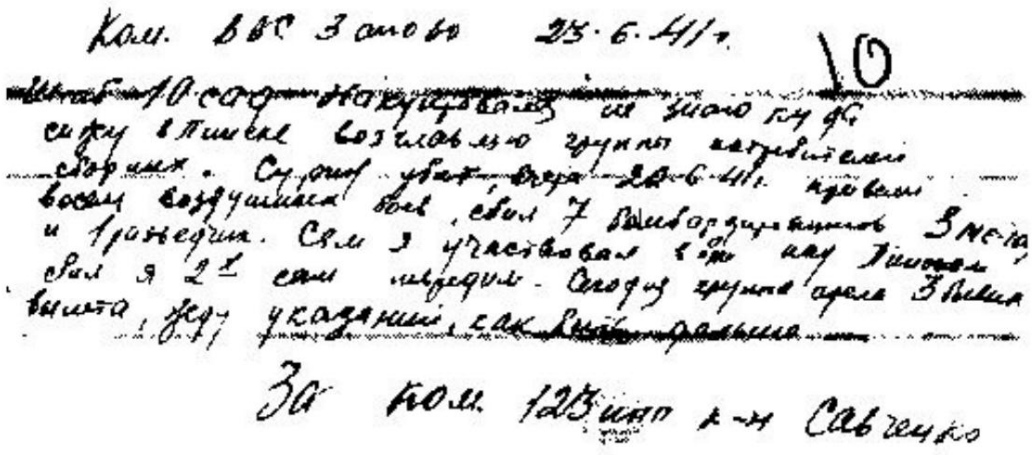
PARM-1 was restored 10 aircraft. (266) So what happened to the 18 damaged seagulls? Were they destroyed by the enemy during the attack on the airfield, were they burned during the retreat, or were they partially restored? For simplicity, we will assume that all 18 were irretrievably lost. 9 fighters, as already mentioned, were shot down in air combat. The arithmetic remainder is 31 I-153. *"At 13.00 an order was*

received from the commander of the 10th SAD to relocate the regiment to Pinsk." (263) At most 18 "gulls" of the regiment flew to Pinsk (according to other reports - to the Zhabchitsy airfield, 10 km northwest of Pinsk). The fate of another 13 I-153 fighters has no clear explanation: *“The Imenin airfield, 123 IAP, was subjected to five raids. The main blow was inflicted by continuous attacks from* ***13.55 to 14.42*** (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me. - *M.S.) by nine Xe-111 and twelve Me-110 aircraft. 18 aircraft were withdrawn from the strike,* ***before the raid they flew to Pinsk.*** *Eight Yak-1s remained undestroyed on the ground.* (255) It is also noteworthy that all reports and combat reports refer only to events at the Imenin airfield (and there were also Strigovo and Ogorodniki airfields, not counting the two sites near Brest and Lyshchitsy). It is by no means possible to call the relocation

of the 123rd IAP “hasty” - on the evening of June 22, the Germans were already a few kilometers from Strigovo and Kobrin. Unfortunately, this relocation cannot be called “organized” either.

“In the afternoon of June 22, about a squadron of fighters (from the 33rd and 123rd aviation regiments) moved to the Pinsk airfield. The commander of the 10th mixed aviation division, which by that time had no technical connection with Pinsk, departed with his headquarters for Pinsk. In the future, the headquarters of the army had no connection with the headquarters of the aviation division. The remnants of this division no longer conducted joint operations with the troops of the army, ” writes Colonel General Sandalov in his monograph on the military operations of the 4th Army (issued in 1961 under the heading“ Secret ”), at the beginning of the war - colonel, chief of staff 4th army. (267) True, he further points out that the relocation of the division was authorized from above: *“The commander of the 10th mixed aviation division with the headquarters and the remnants of the aviation regiments, with the permission of the front headquarters, moved to Pinsk on June 22.”*

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Report of the squadron commander of the 123rd IAP Captain Savchenko, June 23, 1941

In the archive file “Combat Orders and Reports of the Headquarters of the 10th SAD”, a gray telegraph form is filed as sheet 7, on which it is illegibly written in black pencil: “... collected the *remnants of the flight crew at the edge of the forest, one km southeast of Zhabchitsy and sits in the forest . At the airfield Zhabchitsy sits 10 SB, 2 "seagulls" 123 IAP. All. There is fuel and bombs, but no planes.” (268)* Who reports to whom is not clear. Sheet 10 is much more distinct - both in form (written in ink, in a beaded rapid handwriting) and in content:

“To the Commander of the Air Force

ZapOVO on June 23, 1941, the Headquarters of the 10th SAD was evacuated, I don’t know where. I am sitting in Pinsk, leading a group of combined fighters (another indirect confirmation that not all aircraft of the 33rd IAP, and possibly even the 74th ShAP, were destroyed. - *M.S.). Surin is killed. Yesterday, 22.6.41, we conducted eight air battles, shot down 7 bombers, 3 Me-109s and 1 reconnaissance aircraft. I myself participated in the battle over Pinsk, I shot down 2, I myself was unharmed. Today the group made 3 sorties, I am waiting for instructions on what to do next.*

For the commander of the 123rd IAP Captain

Savchenko. (269) According to the ZhBD of the 123rd IAP, the regiment (more precisely, what was left of it) on June 23 *“made several dozen sorties to cover the city of Pinsk. When repelling an enemy raid on the airfield, three Junkers-88 bombers were shot down, two of them*

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destroyed captain Savchenko [26] ~~a~~nd *one - art. political instructor Sirotin.* (263) After that, the rate of relocation picks up rapidly. *"By the end of the day (June 23), the regiment received an order to relocate to the city of Bobruisk, which was carried out on the same day."* Bobruisk is already 360 km east of Brest.

On June 25, the fighters of the 123rd IAP are still fighting; in Opersvodka No. 4 of the headquarters of the 13th bomber division we read: *“The attached 9 I-153 continued to cover the airfield and the mountains. Bobruisk, 1 Yu-88 was shot down in air battles.* (270) In the meantime, on June 24, the headquarters of the 10th SAD moved to Gomel, i.e. to the deep rear (see Map No. 3). On June 26, the 123rd IAP also flies to the Zyabrovka airfield (15 km southeast of Gomel). In the evening of the same day, 52 pilots of the regiment and 28 people of the technical staff left by train for Monino near Moscow. (271) Later, the regiment fought in the skies of Moscow, covered the ice Road of Life near Leningrad from the air, became the 27th Guards and one of the best fighter regiments of the Soviet Air Force.

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2.5. In the sky over Grodno

The 11th SAD and the 3rd Combined Arms Army, to which it was attached, were located in the zone, which, according to the pre-war plans of the Soviet command, was to become a passive sector of the front.

"With a stubborn defense, firmly cover Grodno and the directions to Bialystok and Volkovysk" - these are all the tasks that were assigned to the right (northern) flank of the Western Front. The war began according to the plans of the German command, but even in these plans the Grodno-Lida direction was not the main one (the 3rd tank group of G. Goth struck north, from Suwalki to Vilnius, i.e. on the left flank of the neighboring North-Western Front) . Nevertheless, fierce battles broke out in the sky over Grodno, and the 127th IAP of the 11th Air Division was destined to suffer the greatest **combat** losses and inflict very noticeable damage on the enemy. The 11th SAD

had only three air regiments: two fighter (122nd IAP and 127th IAP) and one bomber (16th BAP). The bomber regiment was "old" and, like most of its peers, participated in the war against Finland. 17 crews in the regiment were trained for night flights - a very high figure for that time. (275) The 16th BAP was re-equipped with the latest Pe-2 dive bombers for that time; by the beginning of the war, they were received in the amount of 37 units, and 39 crews were already flying on them independently, in addition, there were still 23 SBs left in the regiment. (246) If these figures are true, then the 16th BAP is in first place among all the bomber regiments of the Red Army Air Force in terms of the number of Pe-2s received before the start of the war[27]

The fighter regiments, as can be seen even from the numbers, were "young", formed in 1940. They were far from the first in the “queue” for receiving “new types” fighters - the re-equipment of the 122nd IAP with the LaGG-3 was expected only in the 4th quarter of 1941. Paradoxically, this was precisely what benefited the cause - by the start of hostilities fighters of the 11th SAD flew on "donkeys" and "gulls" of the latest modifications, with powerful

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motors M-62 and M-63, in good technical condition. (273) In the 122nd IAP, most of the donkeys were armed with cannons (I-16 type 27/28). (274) The flight

training of the division's crews for the first four months of 1941 was quite average (in every sense of the word) - about one thousand flight hours per regiment, 18 hours per crew. But in one aspect, the fighter regiments of the 11th SAD were noticeably different for the better - if you believe (without this "if" it becomes more and more difficult to discuss the documents of the 41st year) the report of the headquarters of the Air Force of the Western OVO dated May 15, the number conducted in the 11th SAD there were more training air battles (327) than in the 9th and 10th divisions combined (respectively 68 and 205). (211) According to the memoirs of the Hero of the Soviet Union S. F. Dolgushin (at the beginning of the war - lieutenant, pilot of the 122nd IAP, since the fall of 1943 - commander of the 156th IAP, at the end of his military career - lieutenant general, head Department of Tactics at the VVIA named after N.E. Zhukovsky), flight training was very intensive: *“Flying four days a week: we fly two days - a day of rest, and again we fly for two days ... That day I made 16 landings and a very good car I mastered my*

own ... I started the war with a flight time of 240 hours, and this is for 1940 - 1941. ” (274) There are other assessments of the state of affairs in the 11th SAD. In a document with a strange title "Reference material on the Air Force of the Western OVO for 1940 - 1941." (signed on May 15, 1941 by the commander *of the Air Force of the district, Major General Kopets and the deputy* commander of the brigade commissar Listrov) we read: *deeds falls on 122 IAP and 285 air base. In these parts, NPO orders, statutes, and internal regulations are being violated at every step.” (275)* By the way, the theme of drunkenness and "moral decay" is reflected in Dolgushin's memoirs quite clearly ...

The airfield network of the 11th SAD was quite wide: three regiments accounted for 6 permanent and 13 operational airfields (including 3 requiring expansion), "in addition, the *division has 5 landing sites ranging in size from 800 by 800 to 1000 by 1000 meters" ,* i.e. quite usable "seagulls" and "donkeys". (276) In contrast to the situation in the 9th and 10th air divisions, operational

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whose airfields turned out to be 20-50 km from the border, the airfields of the 11th SAD were significantly further away (see Map No. 4), only the Novy Dvor airfield, to which the 122nd IAP was withdrawn from Lida on May 17, was close proximity (about 25 km) from the border. At the same time, the 127th IAP flew from the Skidel base airfield to Lesishche, and the 16th BAP flew to the Cherlen airfield. There they met the beginning of the war.

"The pale predawn sky over the Lesishche field airfield on June 22, 1941 was suddenly cut by a short arc of a rocket. Anxiety! The commander of the 127th Fighter Aviation Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel A.V. Gordienko, who was checking the posts at the aircraft stands, immediately went to the command post of the unit. The operational duty officer reported by phone that a message had been received about the bombing of the city of Grodno by German aircraft. Having specified the cause of the alarm, Lieutenant Colonel L.V. Gordienko ordered the duty unit to fly to the attack area and find out the situation. One after another, the planes piloted by pilots Lieutenant I. E. Komarov, junior lieutenants A. N. Danilin and K. M. Treshchev, ***at 3 o'clock. 30 min.*** (hereinafter it is underlined by me. - *M.S.) went on a*

reconnaissance flight ... The first air battle was carried out at five o'clock in the morning by five fighters, led by the political officer of the 1st squadron, senior political officer A.S. Danilov. To the north of Grodno, at an altitude of one and a half thousand meters, the pilots saw three twin-engine bombers on a head-on course and went on a frontal attack. Two Nazis, unable to withstand the onslaught, began to go back with a decrease, but the leading Junkers continued to fly. From the third attack, A. S. Danilov destroyed it, and the flight commanders S. S. Deryugin and I. F. Druzhkov with their partners, pilots S. A. Garin and K. M. Treshchev, shot

down the fleeing planes. It was a big success. The battle showed that the "seagulls" can effectively fight with German aircraft. Lieutenants R. I. Varakin, S. Ya. Zhukovsky, senior political instructor A. A. Artyomov, who returned from assignments, also lived up to new victories ... Soon, senior political instructor A. S. Danilov again showed high skill. The eight fighters led by him scattered

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a group of enemy planes over Grodno, and west of the city of Danilov, a plane was shot down, the second one in the morning, which fell on the

outskirts of the village of Krapivno. Returning to the patrol zone, the pilots saw that more than 40 Nazi aircraft were preparing to storm the Cherlena airfield, where the 16th BAP was based. From the east, Soviet fighters, two squadrons of the 127th Aviation Regiment, were rapidly approaching the enemy bombers in combat formation. Raised in 10 us. 10 min. on alarm, they immediately crashed into the enemy group and started a fight ... The fight lasted over 30 minutes. Up to 70 aircraft participated from both sides. The enemy had not only quantitative, but also qualitative superiority. Soviet aviators shot down 4 aircraft, but they themselves lost 5 fighters. Three pilots at different times reached their own, and two - lieutenants P. A. Kuzmin and N. N. Mikhailov - died ...

In the current situation, the command of the regiment sought to ensure the timely preparation of aircraft for repeated combat missions, the uninterrupted supply of fuel and especially ammunition, the need for which had increased dramatically. There were many other issues that needed to be resolved quickly. And they did. The political staff of the unit was actively involved in the matter ...

In the afternoon, a group of pilots led by Lieutenant S. Ya. Zhukovsky distinguished themselves. Flying out to support ground troops in the Grodno-Skidel area, they met German bombers, which, under the cover of fighters, were reorganizing for an attack. In a short-lived battle, S. Ya. Zhukovsky and junior lieutenant B. A. Fokin shot down one enemy aircraft each, and the third fell victim to the entire group. Having disrupted the attack, the pilots returned to their airfield without loss ... ***Until late*** *in the evening, the pilots*

of the 127th IAP fought against the fascist invaders, sparing no effort and life. Lieutenants L.V. Gribakin, I.G. Markov, A.D. Petkun, A.I. Panin, M.D. Razumtsev, M.S. Filippov and junior lieutenant N.V. Sushkin. Despite the severity of the fighting, the pilots literally rushed into the air. Squadron commander I. N. Drozdov

made five sorties and

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shot down two aircraft, senior political instructor A. A. Artyomov took to the air nine times and destroyed three enemy

vehicles. The enemy searched for almost the whole day, but could not find our airfield. The command of the regiment attached great importance to camouflage. Early in the morning, after an alarm, technicians and mechanics dispersed the materiel and equipped aircraft stands at the edge of a large forest. These works were supervised by the communist engineer-captain BC Kubarev. The pilots were ordered to use tactical methods of masking the airfield. Returning from assignments, they approached the base at low level flight. After landing, the planes immediately took cover. During takeoff, the required altitude was not reached immediately, but after leaving the airfield area at low

altitude. ***Only after 19 hours the enemy discovered the airfield, and*** *soon about 30 Yu-87 bombers, accompanied by Me 109 fighters, flew in to attack it. An air battle ensued. Despite the clear advantage, the enemy still failed to destroy our "seagulls" on the ground. The bombers attacked by the Soviet pilots did not conduct aimed fire, but hit the squares, their bombs did not reach the target. There were losses on both sides in this fight.*

In front of the personnel of the regiment, the commander of the link, Lieutenant N. P. Eroshin, perf~~o~~rmed a feat [28] . He went straight from takeoff to a frontal attack. The German pilot on the Me-109 had a clear advantage in speed and maneuverability, he could easily shoot down a take-off plane. However, Yeroshin did not flinch and did not turn off course. When approaching, two long bursts of machine-gun fire sounded simultaneously. At the cost of his life, a Soviet pilot shot down a Nazi vulture. The comrades buried Lieutenant Yeroshin next to the airfield... The Soviet government highly appreciated the successes of the 127th IAP, which made 180 sorties on the first day of the war...” (

This text (published by the Military Historical Journal in 1971) was written by Lieutenant Colonel A.P. Proskurin, in the first days of the war - deputy commander of the 127th IAP for political affairs. I quoted it in the same detail in the very first version of the book “On peacefully sleeping airfields”, accompanied by the following comment: “If it were not for the mention of the “first day of the war” and geographical

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name, then the Soviet reader, brought up by Soviet writers, will categorically not believe that we are talking about the events of June 22,

1941. The impression is really created that these events are taking place in another country, in another army, in the wrong year ... The regiment commander is in his place, the duty link is on takeoff, the phone is in touch, the airfield is disguised so that the Germans barely found it in the evening, the fighter regiment responds with fire to a strike on the airfield, and even the words about the “current situation” are not at all a prelude to the report about the “relocation” of 300 kilometers to the rear (“in the current situation, the regiment command sought to ensure timely preparation of aircraft for repeated combat *sorties …”).*

It all looks beautiful, but is it true? The year of publication is “stagnant”, the author is a political worker, which does not sound very convincing today ... I included this text in Peacefully Sleeping Airfields, because - unlike hundreds of other articles of this genre - Lieutenant Colonel Proskurin gives six references to archival funds TsAMO. But I confess, the "worm of doubt" moved. And now we have the opportunity to compare journalism with a unique primary document. The document is truly unique. I have not been able

to find anything like this in the archival files of other air regiments. We are talking about the "Journal of combat work of the 127th IAP". (278) The events of the first day of the war are described on 7 large (spread) sheets of a standard accounting form. 31 episodes of the "combat work" of the regiment were recorded to the nearest minute (time of takeoff, landing, total raid of the group, task, report on its implementation and losses). The fact that the "Journal" was compiled in hot pursuit of events can be judged not only by the abundance of the smallest details (which could hardly be restored in hindsight), but also by the obvious ignorance of the compiler of the "Journal" of some important circumstances. For example, the story of the ram, committed by the senior political officer A. S. Danilov, which thundered throughout the country and was marked on July 9, 1941 by the Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Armed Forces and an editorial in the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper, is presented in the Journal as follows: *“ One I-153 aircraft (st.*

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colonel Danilov) did not return to his airfield. In the margin there is an inscription in pencil: *"The pilot is wounded." (279)* And no rams...

The mere fact of the existence of such a document confirms the main thing: from dawn to dusk on June 22, 1941, the 127th IAP remained a military unit, controlled and capable. The main outline of events described in the article by political officer Proskurin is also confirmed. The number of fighter sorties, recalculated using a modern calculator, turned out to be 179. To tell the truth, this number (179 sorties) includes 35 flights from airfield to airfield, but given the density with which German aircraft hung in the sky over the 11th GARDEN, these flights cannot be called "pleasure" either. Some pilots of the 127th IAP acted that day with great tension: 6 sorties were completed by ml. Lieutenant Deryugin, 5 sorties each - Lieutenant Kupcha and senior political instructor Artyomov, 2 - 3 sorties were made by Danilin, Danilov, Drozdov, Druzhkov, Zhukovsky (future Colonel General of Aviation), Fedorov. The regiment was indeed at

the “starting point”, at the Lesishche airfield, until the very evening. Relocation - moreover, relocation to neighboring airfields of the divisional area, and not to the deep rear - began only at 20:00. 08 min. It was at this moment (that is, even later than Proskurin writes) that the first enemy air raid of the day took place. Hardly anyone can now answer the question - was it a coincidence or did the Germans do a good job of aerial reconnaissance. The composition of the strike group was, of course, smaller: no *“30 Yu-87 bombers”* are visible in the document, but only the “Messer”, which caught the fighters of the 127th IAP at the time of takeoff, inflicted serious losses on the regiment: *“During takeoff, there were the attack of the Me-109 group on the Lesishche*

airfield. The flight personnel, having made several attacks on enemy aircraft, left for landing (as in the text. - *M.S.) in groups and alone at the airfields of Shchuchin, Zheludok, Lida* (attributed in pencil: "Slonim"). *As a result of air combat, 1 Me-109 was shot down. Losses: 2 killed (Lt. Eroshin, Senior Lt. Kuzmin), 1 did not return (Lt. Petkun), forcedly sat down 1 (Senior Political Officer Artyomov received minor bruises when the plane was nosed, the plane was broken).* (280)

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The raid did not last "40 minutes" (as in the report of the chief of staff of the 33rd IAP) and not an hour and a half, as is customary in later stories about a "crushing blow to airfields", but no more than 7 minutes (which is much more plausible - based on although would be from the ammunition Me-109). The 3rd and 1st squadrons, which rose at 20.15 from the Lesishche airfield, no longer meet German fighters in the air.

There really was a big group battle over the Cherlen airfield, and at the very time that Proskurin points out: from 10.10 to 10.30. The first to enter it were 8 "gulls" under the command of ml. Lieutenant Deryugin, who were returning from patrol over Grodno, then a total of 23 more fighters of the 127th IAP were raised to help them. The enemy forces are estimated at 27 (in another report - 30) Dornier-215 bombers [29] with fighter cover of an unspecified number. The losses of the regiment in this battle were even less than Proskurin indicates, although also very heavy: two "gulls" were shot down, the pilots Markov and Mikhailov died, Lieutenant Varakin was wounded, he was forced to land the plane outside the airfield, senior political instructor Danilov was wounded, the plane was broken (we will assume that when ramming). The pilots of the 127th IAP announced after this battle that 2 Dorniers and 2 escort fighters were shot down, identified as Me-110. In total, on June 22, the regiment lost 12 I-153 fighters and one U-2

liaison (all losses in the air, not a single one on the ground!). Irretrievably lost (killed or missing) 10 pilots, 3 pilots were injured. These are the largest combat (if we understand by this word losses in air combat) losses on the first day of the war **among all the fighter regiments of the western districts.** The real number of victories of the 127th IAP, as always, is quite difficult to establish. We will not comment on the description of a continuous series of downed German aircraft presented in Proskurin's article. Judging by the Combat Operation Record Book, the regiment's pilots reported 11 enemy aircraft shot down: 3 Me-109, 2 Me-110, 2 Do-215, 1 Ju-88, 1 Ju-87, 1 Hs-126, 1 FW -189.

“Daily reports of the 6th department of the service of the quartermaster general of the Luftwaffe” (collected and published by R. Larintsev and A. Valyaev-Zaitsev), information from which has already been repeatedly cited in this book with the words “according to the data

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adversary", also cannot be considered "ultimate truth". And neat Germans can make mistakes, inevitably delaying the passage of reports to command authorities (and thus some losses on June 22 could become known in Berlin only a week later). Quite often, instead of indicating the place of battle, there is the name of the airfield, to which the wrecked plane reached. It is far from always possible to "decipher" the toponymy of the region (Polish-Prussian-Lithuanian frontier), which repeatedly passed from country to country. Great opportunities for manipulation are also opened up by the system of "excessive diversity" adopted in the Luftwaffe in the classification of aircraft; losses, for example, "uncontrolled collision with the ground" - what is it about? Is it a pilot error, equipment failure or a consequence of air combat? reasons

The only indisputable advantage of the Daily Reports is that there are no other reliable sources on the air battles of June 1941 at all - the territory over which the battles took place remained behind the advancing enemy, the ground units and formations of the Red Army disappeared like fog at dawn, respectively , it is not possible to find the correct confirmation of the victories of Soviet fighters (and only the nameplate with the serial number of the aircraft, found and screwed on the ground) can be considered "correct". As for the way of interpreting these "Reports", I am guided by the following rule: everything, except for obvious cases of technical failures or

gross errors of German pilots (for example, very numerous cases of collision of aircraft on takeoff), is considered the result of "enemy influence", i.e. . Soviet aviation. Such a technique leads to some overestimation of the number of Soviet fighter victories, which overestimation, one would hope, compensates for the inevitable underestimation associated with the delay in the receipt of reports from combat units to the Luftwaffe headquarters. Of course, the available sources cannot claim more than an approximate estimate.

So, Grodno is found in the "Reports" for June 22, 1941 seven times. And every time, next to the indication of the serial number of the aircraft shot down over Grodno, there are full-weighted 100%. Shot down: one scout FW-189 (the second was fired upon in the air, one crew member was wounded),